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THE LIFE OF JESUS

THE LIFE OF JESUS

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM

BY

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INTRODUCTION

We are to engage in a series of seven studies in the life of Jesus from the point of view of the higher criticism. At the very outset it behooves me, as a representative of the Society for Ethical Culture, to remind you that no statements of mine are to be construed as indicating the position of the Ethical Movement on the subjects to be discussed. The truth is, the Ethical Movement, as such, has no "position" on any subjects save those upon which all its constituent members are agreed. And these are expressed in the constitution both of the "American Ethical Union" and of the "International Union of Ethical Societies." These official and only authoritative sources of information as to what the Ethical Movement stands for clearly imply a respect for freedom of thought which forbids any representative of the Movement from committing it to his personal opinions upon any open or debated question. Consequently whatever views I may express in this series of lectures must be construed as representing no one but myself. Probably the concurrence of other Ethical leaders in

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many an opinion can be counted upon, but in no sense whatever are either they, or the Societies they lead, sponsors for my utterances. With this brief admonitory foreword as a fitting and necessary introduction, let us address ourselves to the first subject of the series, The Higher Criticism of the Bible.

PREFATORY NOTE

In the following pages I have endeavored to reproduce, as nearly as possible in their original form, eight of twelve lectures delivered, without notes, on Sunday evenings, in the winter of 1912 at the Meeting-House of the Society for Ethical Culture of New York. It is in response to the written request of several hundred persons that these lectures are now published.

ALFRED W. MARTIN.

NEW YORK.

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THE LIFE OF JESUS

I

THE HIGHER CRITICISM

The purpose of this preliminary lecture is not to gratify any intellectual curiosity or to stimulate any speculative interest which the subject may have engendered. On the contrary, it is because the subject has a practical importance and stands ethically related to one of the great literary sources of inspiration for the conduct of life that I feel warranted in devoting an hour to its consideration.

Through acquaintance with the aims, methods and results of the higher criticism there is certain to be generated a new interest in the Bible, a better understanding and a more intelligent appreciation of its contents. Indeed, we may reasonably expect a reproduction, to some extent, of that

renaissance of interest in the Bible which occurred in Shakspere's day, when people walked miles to hear selections from the Bible read by a dim candle-light; when churches were crowded, not to hear a popular preacher, but to listen to readings from the Bible; when, after a millennium of ecclesiastical bondage, in the dawn of the revival of learning, people in every walk of life sought to satisfy their craving for knowledge of this book.

Why should we wish for a similar renaissance of interest in the Bible? First, because the Bible as an influence stands unsurpassed, nay, unrivalled, among the sacred scriptures of the world's religions. It has influenced our language; for, during the seventeenth century, the formative period of the English tongue, the Bible was, *par excellence, the* household book. Scores of suggestive phrases, such as "making bricks without straw," "selling one's birthright," "entertaining angels unawares," "weighed in the balance and found wanting," passed directly from the Bible into popular speech. The Bible has influenced our literature, and not

least in setting the standard of style. The ultimate standard of English prose is universally conceded to be the Bible. Its directness of statement, simplicity of words, power to convince, dignity, earnestness and rhythm, all these constitute qualities that mark every classical specimen of English literature. The Bible has influenced art and to a far greater degree than is commonly supposed. More than two-thirds of the paintings in the galleries and churches of Europe interpret Biblical subjects, including the three supreme religious pictures in the world—Raphael's Sistine Madonna, Da Vinci's Last Supper, Angelo's drama on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Add to these influences exerted by the Bible the effect it has had, and ever will have, on the moral education of children, providing, as it does, the best extant material for the development of character in the young.

A second reason for wishing to see a renaissance of interest in the Bible relates to what is known as the "higher criticism." This has given the Bible back to us, as it were, by making it more readable, more in-

telligible, more interesting; creating in us the same spontaneous delight we feel when reading the Odyssey or Faust.

Criticism may be defined as judgment based on close observation and systemized knowledge. And since man's judgments have improved with his power and opportunity to observe closely and give order and precision to what he knows, criticism has had a progressive history. In other words, man has always been a critic, and the sole difference here between the savage and the savant is one of degree, not of kind. Moreover, the present era, far from being *the* age of criticism, is only the latest stage in a process as old as man and destined to continue as long as there are thinking men and women on the earth.

Applied to ancient books criticism means determining their date, genuineness and authenticity—genuineness indicating that the given work was written by the author whose name it bears, while authenticity relates to the accuracy and fulness with which the facts have been presented. And these issues are determined by both external and internal

evidence. When considering the former we ask such questions as these: How far back can reference to the book be traced? Where is mention first made of it? Who refers to it? What is the value of his testimony? Turning to internal evidence, we ask: Does the book contain any record of its own composition? Is it possible to trace the materials the author had at hand and to fix the mode in which they were combined? Are there any hints within the work as to its date or the age in which it was produced? For many books came into existence under conditions in which no account was taken of their birth and growth. Indian hymns, Greek myths, Teutonic legends, Scandinavian sagas, the Pentateuch, the Gospels—these are examples of literature the formation of which is comparable to certain strata of the earth's crust—the result of successive accretions of sedimentary deposit during centuries. So these books, and countless others, are the result of successive literary accretions at a time when no record was made of the mode of their formation. Hence, the task of criticism is in no small measure the removal of

the mystery that enshrouds the genesis and development of this literature by tracing the manner in which it assumed its present form.

The illustrations just cited include Biblical books, thereby indicating that Biblical criticism is only part of a larger literary movement looking to the elucidation of what is obscure regarding the origin and growth of ancient books. This wider critical activity, including the Bible in its scope, can be traced as far back as the third century before our era, when, in Alexandria, certain Greek cities disputed the authorship of the Iliad, doubting its Homeric origin and holding that if it should prove to be in truth Homer's work, then *he* could not have been also the author of the Odyssey. But this promising start in literary criticism was soon brought to a standstill by the dissolution of the Græco-Roman civilization, the first in a series of causes that kept the revival of Greek culture and criticism in abeyance for over a thousand years. At the beginning of our era the whole Græco-Roman world was overspread with hopelessness and despair. Everything whispered of decay and death.

In the upper classes of society wealth and debauchery were coupled, in the lower classes poverty and oppression. Anyone could see that a politico-social catastrophe was imminent. No one felt moved to engage in any form of positive action. All literary activity, whether creative or critical, steadily declined. In the masterpiece of Marcus Aurelius, who sought to hold up the falling empire by the power of personal example, we see how inevitable was the disaster which not even a noble Stoicism could avert. Then over this decaying civilization there spread Christianity with its gospel of a kingdom beyond the skies and the consequent absorption of interest in "other-worldiness" as against the Greek's devotion to the affairs of this world. Thus, with the rise of mediæval Christianity, there came not only indifference to criticism, but absolute prohibition of it, on pain of excommunication from "the sole channel of Divine Grace." To postpone the resumption of critical investigation longer still, there occurred the invasion of Central Europe by the barbarian conquerors from the north. Obviously these invading

hordes were in no condition to receive literary culture. Centuries would have to elapse before intellectual habits could be formed and the people be fitted for literary training and critical inquiry. Small wonder, then, that not until the fifteenth century was there a renaissance of that interest in criticism manifested by the ancient Greeks. Nor, indeed, was it until the middle of the eighteenth century that literary criticism of the modern scientific type began. Within the past century a vast deal of critical work has been done on the great epic poems of the Hindus, Parsees, Greeks and Germans, on the Bibles of the great religions, notably the Koran and the Pitakas in the non-Christian group, enabling us to trace the development of Islamic and Buddhistic thought in a manner and to a degree quite unprecedented. Already a whole library of criticism on the Shaksperian drama has been produced, while one on the works of Dante and of Goethe is well under way.

Coming now to the Old and New Testaments, criticism of these has had a history of its own. Its beginnings appear in the ver-

dict of certain Jewish scholars of the first century regarding the admission of the inter-Biblical Apocalypse, "Enoch," into the Old Testament canon. They declared against its inclusion, perhaps on the ground of its pseudonymity, or because of the extravagances that mark its angelology and demonology. Among the early Christian Fathers we find Origen, Jerome, Irenæus, conspicuous for their discussion of problems in Biblical criticism. In the Middle Ages the name of Rabbi Ben Ezra towers above all others. He may, with considerable propriety, be called the father of Pentateuchal criticism, for his commentary on the first five books of the Old Testament, published at Toledo toward the close of the eleventh century, is the lineal ancestor of the most recent works on this subject. Browning, who was educated to know "the holes and corners of history," discovered the Spanish commentator and, seeing in him a pioneer, the blazer of a new trail, an original philosopher and critic, lifted him out of obscurity and immortalized him in the poem that bears his name.

In the Renaissance two other Jews, Spin-

oza and Astruc, carried on the work Ben Ezra had so auspiciously begun. And just before them appeared Erasmus and Luther; the former debating with rare skill the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews; the latter, with characteristic bluntness and frankness, disputing the merit of various Biblical books, especially the Epistle of James, which he styled "an epistle of straw" because it did not teach his favorite doctrine of "justification by faith." Mention must be made also of Luther's celebrated antagonist, Carlstadt, who took radical ground touching the Johannine authorship of the New Testament Apocalypse, daring to doubt that it was the work of John, the disciple of Jesus, a position sustained by the great majority of modern scholars.

Hitherto all Biblical criticism had been based on certain assumptions. No one as yet, not even the great Erasmus, had approached the Bible books after the manner of those Greeks who first questioned the genuineness of the Iliad. Preconceptions, predilections, hypotheses—these governed the conclusions of each critic in turn to a greater

or lesser degree. In none was there utter freedom of thought or thorough-going scientific method. It was assumed, for example, that the books were divinely inspired and written in the order in which we now have them. It was believed that the records of events represented the testimony of eye-witnesses and that all the miracles of both Testaments were actual occurrences. It was further maintained that Jesus was intellectually infallible and morally perfect, and that Christianity must stand in a class by itself as the one only true, divine, and absolute religion. But about the year 1770 Lessing and his younger contemporary Herder came forward with the proposition that the Bible should be read and judged as any other book, because it shows evidences of being a human production. Moreover, these critics declared that no real harm can follow from such procedure, because whatever is true in the Bible now, will remain so when criticism has completed its work. In the course of the following decade this startling proposal was systematically adopted by Eichhorn, who in 1782 launched upon an eager, expectant

world the "higher criticism," as he himself styled it in the preface to his "*Einleitung in das alte Testament.*" To him this criticism of the Bible was "higher" than that of his predecessors because conducted *above* the plane of unwarranted presuppositions and preconceptions. But besides this interpretation of the word "higher" as given by Eichhorn, two other meanings have been attached to it. It was used to designate criticism that is positive and constructive in purpose and in results as contrasted with that of the French Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century—Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire—"lower" because at once sceptical in tone and iconoclastic in teaching. Similarly to the critical work of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll, marked as it is by the same characteristics and glaringly deficient in scholarship, the term "lower" was applied. In the popular brochure by Colonel Ingersoll, "The Mistakes of Moses," we have a critique which, in the light of the assured results of the higher criticism, were better entitled, "The Mistakes of Robert Ingersoll." For no scholar to-day would think of

attributing to Moses any of the "mistakes" with which the humorous but unscholarly monograph charges the great Hebrew liberator and legislator. In making this criticism I would not be unmindful of the great service Ingersoll rendered to religion. Remembering the particular period in which his work was done—those decades of fierce controversy over issues now dead beyond all possibility of resuscitation—we must gratefully acknowledge that no other man of his time did so much to help the faith of the past on to the faith of the future. Nor is it extravagant to maintain that much of the liberalism conspicuous in orthodox circles to-day must be attributed, in large measure, to Ingersoll's exposé of antiquated beliefs. On the other hand, it is equally pertinent to observe that, had his scholarship matched his wit, the Biblical criticism in which he indulged would have escaped classification with that of his spiritual ancestors in France. For the criticism which lacks historical perspective, which accepts myths and legends as literal facts, which assumes that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses because his name ap-

pears on the first page, which asks no question as to the origin, date, genuineness, authenticity and *tendenz* of the books to be criticized—such criticism is properly designated "lower" as compared to that which rises to the plane where full cognizance is taken of these fundamental prerequisites for judging Bible books.

A third meaning given to the term "higher criticism" contrasts it with textual criticism. The function of the latter is to determine whether or not the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament actually represent the original writing of the authors. But behind this text-problem is that of the sources and methods employed by authors and editors in making the text. Here is a problem *higher up* the stream of investigation and hence the use of the term "higher criticism" to denote this particular branch of inquiry.

Following Eichhorn's lead there appeared scholar after scholar, each contributing his quota to the solution to one or another of the problems which the higher criticism had before it. To recall these contributors and

their respective legacies to our present heritage of Biblical knowledge would carry us too far afield. Let it suffice to take but a passing glance at some of those stars of the first magnitude that shine in the firmament of New Testament criticism. Before all others David Friederich Strauss must be named, for with the appearance of his "Life of Jesus" in 1835, began the era of scientific investigation of the Biblical basis of Christianity. That book created a veritable panic in the theological world, because it seemed to destroy the Christian religion at its very source. A mass of polemical literature was published within the decade following the appearance of Strauss' work and critical inquiry entered on new, unexplored fields in which it is still at work. In the preface of this epoch-making book Strauss laid down the dictum that prior to all other questions concerning Jesus is this: "How far do we stand in the Gospels on historical ground?" Dissatisfied with earlier, partial applications of the "mythical" theory, which interpreted the beginning and the close of Jesus' life in theories of myth, Strauss proceeded to apply

the theory to the intervening narratives of the Gospel story, showing how most of the historical narratives have been mythically embellished, yet holding at the same time that "the theory of the Christian faith is quite independent of all these critical investigations." But despite this comforting assurance conveyed in the preface, it was generally felt that the book itself annulled it, and a succession of fierce and protracted onslaughts were made upon the author's position. It remained for his famous teacher, Ferdinand Christian Baur, to give the world a calm and just estimate of his pupil's book. In the course of his review Baur pointed to a still more fundamental inquiry than even that which Strauss thought basic, namely, examination of *the documents* which are the sources of gospel history. To that task the illustrious founder of the Tübingen School applied himself with consecrated zeal, bringing to the gigantic task a wealth of erudition, a breadth and depth of philosophic insight and a delicacy of religious feeling literally unrivaled in the annals of Biblical criticism. It is to Baur more than to any other scholar

that we owe those sound critical methods which are part of the indispensable outfit of all investigators on Biblical subjects. And while the teachings of the school he founded have been in large measure rejected by recent scholarship, the *methods* for which it stood have won for it the deserved praise of being "a fruitful failure."

By far the most important French scholar in the nineteenth century was Ernst Renan. In 1863 he published his *"Vie de Jésus,"* a work which, by its charm of style and the daring originality of its thought, sent a thrill throughout all Europe. The book had the exceptional merit of making Jesus attractive to thousands who had cared nothing for him before. Defective in critical grasp, but possessing fine imaginative power and rare literary skill, the book was neither history nor poetry, but savored of both. By permitting his imagination to work uncontrolled by scrupulous regard for evidence, Renan produced a psychological piece of biographical architecture as fascinating in form as it is deficient in fidelity to facts.

Conspicuous in the field of English scholar-

ship stood J. R. Seeley. His *"Ecce Homo,"* which appeared anonymously in 1866, required of the reader no knowledge of German or French criticism, but simply first hand acquaintance with the Gospels. Treating the subject in entire independence of all ecclesiastical standards and traditions, the author retold the Gospel story with a freshness, vigor and delight that justly gave his book a place in the front rank of writings on the person and teaching of Jesus.

To the late lamented Otto Pfleiderer, perhaps the most beloved of all the followers of Baur, every intelligent reader of the New Testament owes a debt of deepest gratitude. At once philosopher and historian, he was eminently qualified to gather up and set forth in illuminating fashion all the assured results of the higher criticism and to contribute, as no other scholar of our time, to an elucidation of the vexed problems relating to the Apostolic age and the beginnings of the Christian Church.

Foremost among living New Testament critics is Adolf Harnack, recently transferred from his chair in the University of

Berlin to the Royal Library. Like Baur, he is a prodigious worker in the field of Christian origins and the most noteworthy result of his long and consecrated labors is an exposition of the ultimate source, the *"Quelle"* or "Q" document, as it is called, the product of "fresh study of the first three Gospels," a source to which we must turn as our present ultimate medium of information concerning the "sayings" of Jesus.

Of Loisy in France, of Estlin Carpenter in England, of Wrede, Wernle, Schmiedel, Holtzmann, and Weiszacker in Germany, scholars who have perpetuated all that is best in the methods of the illustrious Baur; of Oort, Hooykaas, and Kuenen in Holland, to whom we owe the immortal "Bible for Learners"; of Scott in Canada; of Toy and Bacon and Schmidt in our own country—of these and many other enrichers of critical literature would I speak, did not the time-limit forbid.

Concerning the aim of the higher criticism, it should be observed that it is fundamentally and essentially constructive. This fact is not generally appreciated, because in the ful-

fillment of its aim more or less destruction is inevitable, as indeed is the case in all constructive work. To build houses, the trees of the forest must be destroyed in order that the necessary lumber may be supplied. Quarries must be broken up to furnish the foundation-stones and iron mines annihilated to provide the hardware. If it be said that the higher criticism is destructive, let it be understood that it is so in precisely the same sense that every other science is destructive. The astronomy of Adams and Leverrier destroyed part of the astronomy of Copernicus, as his destroyed part of Ptolemy's and his, in turn, undermined astrology. The chemistry of Richards and Rutherford destroyed, in some measure, that of Davy and Faraday, as they destroyed the pseudo-science of alchemy. So the higher criticism of Holtzman and Weiszacker destroyed part of the criticism of Baur, as he, in turn, destroyed the unscientific work of earlier critics. In other words, all scientific criticism of whatever kind is relative; no one critic ever arrives at a final completion of all that needs to be done, but each destroys errors made by

predecessors and builds a more satisfying structure than had till then been known. Thus the aim is always constructive, even when to the surface observer it appears to be the reverse. So was it, for example, when Lachmann devoted a large part of his life to picking the Iliad to pieces, when De Wette and Wellhausen gave a score or more of years to dissecting the Pentateuch, when Canon Cheyne spent nearly a half-century splitting the book of Isaiah into its original parts. Yet why did these reverent and consecrated critics engage in this seemingly destructive work? The answer is, because they felt their first duty was not to these books, but to truth. They were persuaded that such work would culminate in knowledge of the truth concerning the composition of these books and thus improve our understanding and enhance our appreciation of them. Dear as are their contents and sacred as are the names associated with their origin, yet dearer and most sacred of all is truth, which neither hallowed association nor venerated opinion can be permitted to suppress. "Ye shall *know* the truth and the truth shall make you

free''—free from all spiritual distress, free from the heartache which follows the suspicion that what one believes is false or open to doubt.

Confining our attention to the New Testament, we see the positive and constructive aim of the higher criticism manifested first in its endeavor to restore, as fully and as accurately as possible, not only the original Greek text of our Gospels, but also the documents on which they were based. In the effort to go beyond the Greek translation to the original Aramaic which Jesus spoke, beyond his words to the precise thoughts he sought to convey, and again, beyond both his thoughts and their medium of expression to the *age* in which he lived, the political, social, theological and moral environment in which he was brought up—here also the dominant aim is in evidence. Another of the constructive purposes of the higher criticism is to come into possession of the *historical facts* concerning the person and daily life of Jesus, a task fraught with tremendous difficulties of which the student gets but a foretaste when he learns how the available rec-

ords came into being, and discovers that the first three Gospels, despite their many points of resemblance, yet differ in important particulars, while the fourth is altogether *sui generis,* and not to be consulted for purely biographical information, a distinction to be dwelt upon at greater length in a later lecture. The constructive purpose of the higher criticism is seen once more in its devotion to the task of re-arranging the New Testament books in their chronological order so that the reader may trace with ease the various phases of development in the life and thought of the first century and a half of our era. Nay, more, the higher criticism connects this literature with that of the two preceding centuries, singularly prolific as they were in literary creations. Thus the reader is enabled to trace the birth and growth of those parties, institutions, doctrines and morals which one meets with first in the New Testament. Even the so-called "Apocrypha" of the New Testament are made to do service in promoting the constructive purpose in view, as are also the sacred books that record the life of the Bud-

dha and of Zoroaster and other great religious leaders of whom wonder-stories have been told. Still another aim of the higher criticism that must be mentioned is its endeavor to decide when, where, by whom, and how, these canonical books were written. Are they pure biographies in the sense that they recount the life of Jesus regardless of any preconceived idea of his person and his mission, or do they reveal signs of *tendenz,* of partisanship in their sympathies with one or another of the two dominant parties of the early church? To what extent are the narratives real records of real events? How account for the differences among them in their descriptions of persons, sayings and events? Which comes closest to the original?

In the light of such constructive aims as these there ought to be no question as to the serious and reverent *spirit* in which the work is being undertaken. It requires a consecrated mind to reject consecrated opinions, and in so far as the higher criticism, building conclusions on evidence alone, has substituted for long-cherished beliefs about the Bible others to be more dearly cherished

than the old, it has revealed the noble spirit behind its scientific method. Its representatives care supremely for truth, but in the pursuit of it they lose not sight of reverence, rather letting "more of reverence in them dwell as knowledge grows from more to more," making "one music as before, but vaster."

If, now, it be said that the higher criticism is "dangerous," let it be understood that this is true only in the same sense that Jesus' saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," is dangerous. For even to this day intelligent and respectable people justify questionable Sunday practices by appeal to this affirmation of Jesus. Dangerous the higher criticism is precisely as Dante's denial of the dependence of the State upon the Church for its authority was dangerous, because the ecclesiastical hierarchy construed it as the prelude to anarchy and irreligion, little dreaming that the illustrious successors of Dante, Mazzini and Cavour, five centuries after his death, would appeal to his "*De Monarchia*" when justifying their demand for a free Church in a free State.

Dangerous the higher criticism is in the same sense that Darwin's discovery of the chief factor in the origination of species was dangerous, because it was tantamount to "materialism" and "atheism" in the eyes of the undiscerning masses who saw in his partial explanation of evolution not a mere secondary cause, but a veritable substitute for God! Dangerous, again, it is in the same way that the uninitiated conceived Felix Adler's break with Judaism to be, because in their estimate his "free" religion was certain to breed moral anarchy and gross impiety. But each of these pioneers was on the truth-seeking path from which deviation was impossible save by searing the conscience and tarnishing the soul. For them the promised land of the ideal lay on the *other* side of the Jordan of doubt; their only safety was in pressing on to the further shore.

So, too, the devotees of the higher criticism, obeying the same divine impulse, suffered no fear of consequences to check their loyal pursuit of truth, and the results have justified their consecrated faith. Far from having proved detrimental to the interests

of morality and religion, the assured results of the higher criticism bear witness to the reverse. Even its negative results have contributed to the advancement of ethical and religious thought. Surely it is a spiritual gain to have our conception of God relieved of the severe strain put upon it by narratives accepted as authentic till the higher criticism explained their origin and growth —God commanding Abraham to slay his son Isaac, God ordering Samuel to "hew Agag in pieces" and bidding Moses "despoil the Egyptians" of their jewelry—injunctions now known to be part of the legendary lore of a semi-civilized people not yet emerged from fetichism and the crudest anthropomorphic theism. What a relief to learn that the first chapter of Genesis is a religious poem not a scientific treatise, the product of an exilian Hebrew genius who revamped the cosmology of his Babylonian contemporaries! What an advantage to know that the narratives of Eden and the flood represent primitive attempts at solving the problems of sin and retribution; that the story of Jonah is not history, but ro-

mance, designed to teach ethical truths of paramount importance for us no less than for the Jews of Ptolemy's time! What a help it is to know that we need not apologize for the character of the deity described in the eighth chapter of Jeremiah, nor defend the imprecations recorded in the sixty-ninth psalm! What a weight of moral difficulty is lifted through knowing that Jesus did not curse an innocent fig tree nor obsess the swine of an unsuspecting farmer and involve him in unwarranted loss by their mad rush into the sea! What a blessing to have the virgin-birth story lost as historical fact and found as an exquisite prose-poem, the spontaneous outburst of an adoring and revering soul bespeaking the sentiment of his age and place, so profoundly impressed by the spiritual greatness of Jesus as to feel he must have been born in some supernatural way! What a gain, too, it is to be able to substitute for the belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus (which *all* the Gospels do not teach, neither does the Apostle Paul) the fact that Jesus so lived as to have made his disciples certain of his immortality and

of their own, so that from this sense of certainty a legend symbolical of it arose. Such helpful conclusions are we entitled to form from even the negative results of the higher criticism, removing obstacles to rational faith and just judgment by showing us the real origin and character of the narratives in which the disturbing statements appear. In this connection a particular moral advantage resulting from the higher criticism must be noted. Incalculable harm has come from the process of "allegorizing" or "spiritualizing" defenseless Bible passages to make them harmonize with modern, intellectual and ethical standards. Fifty years ago this "allegorical" method of interpretation was much in favor among Unitarians and Universalists. Such Bible statements as offend the liberal mind were then construed as "parables," or as "dramatic presentations of religious truth." The attempt was made to explain away whatever was repugnant to the moral sense of the Christian believer. To-day, thanks to the beneficent work of the higher criticism, all this is changed. We credit Bible writers with knowing what

they wished to say and saying it in explicit terms. And if we find they have stated an idea or belief which modern thought has outgrown, we make no effort at forcing it into harmony with our present views, but classify it among the "rudiments" of which Paul spoke and with which he dealt so justly and considerately. In short, we recognize the fact that symbolical or allegorical interpretation of literary material is justifiable only when it is involved in the literary form, or is explicitly indicated in the context, or when the author directly states that it is to be employed. Such, in brief, are the canons of symbolical interpretation, and in the narrative portions of the Synoptic Gospels there is no hint of any other than a literal interpretation. Theological crudities, social and personal immoralities, historical inaccuracies, scientific errors, these and kindred "difficulties" in the Bible it has been sought to dispose of by an "allegorizing" process, but there is no legitimate basis on which to establish it. Alas, for the religion which enjoins such procedure! As Professor Toy

in his little brochure on Biblical criticism says, "He who undertakes to defend as inspired the vindictive feeling of certain of the Psalms (as lxix, cix, cxxxvii) is trying to ascribe to God what he would not commend to the community, because he knows that the moral sense of our time would reject it. It does not help the matter to say that these imprecations are directed against the enemies of Israel as the enemies of divine truth, and are, therefore, nothing but prayers in the interests of humanity that truth may prevail. If this were a correct explanation (which it is not) it would still not justify these Psalms. Their spirit is contrary to that of our consciences, as anyone may see, if he will only undertake to apply these imprecations to the vilest wretches and greatest enemies of religion at the present day. His lips would refuse to utter the words. The attempt to force harmony between things radically opposed is apt to warp the intellect as well as obscure the moral vision."

Among the *positive* achievements of the higher criticism a supreme place must be

given to the light shed upon the authorship and date of the constituent books of the Bible. To have them arranged in chronological order has proved an incalculable boon, particularly as so many of the books in both the Old and the New Testament are composite, their several parts separated, in some cases, by centuries. What a privilege and joy to be able to see the dénouement of the political, social, moral and religious life of Israel in the centuries from the period of the Judges to that of the Maccabees; or, to trace, within the shorter period covered by the New Testament, the orderly progress of religious thought, church government and theological doctrine; to note and understand Paul's cosmopolitanism as contrasted with the provincialism of James, to appreciate the various conceptions of Jesus that were current in the first two centuries, illustrated by the three chief literary monuments of the time—the Synoptic Gospels, Paul's letters, and the Fourth Gospel—to see how and why the ecclesiastical polity of the primitive Christian Church underwent modification after the death of Paul, losing its democratic

character and moving definitely toward an episcopacy! All this has been brought within the easy reach of readers now that the disorderliness of Biblical literature has been replaced by a chronological sequence.

And if it be asked, how did the disorderliness originally occur? what caused the literary chaos which the Bible, as it is, exhibits? the answer is briefly as follows: Literary ownership in ancient Palestine and Egypt did not have the significance attaching to it in our time and place. Editors made additions to manuscripts as they saw fit, and without the least consciousness of violating literary rights. Scribes combined various manuscripts in one scroll, either for scribal reasons or because of imagined agreement of contents, witness, for example, what we see in the books of Isaiah, Zechariah, Proverbs, Matthew, Luke. Ecclesiastical authorities, collecting books and arranging them to form a canon of scripture, were governed not by chronological considerations, but by the desire to educate and edify their readers. Then, too, parchment was expensive, so that on grounds of sheer

economy manuscripts would be combined with little or no reference to their interrelation—a practice that must have frequently occurred in the case of anonymous hagiographa such as the Psalms and Proverbs.

Though uncertainty still attaches to the authorship and date of certain Bible books, in most cases the conclusions reached may be regarded as fixed beyond any likelihood of further controversy.

The non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is a conspicuous instance of such assured results of the higher criticism. That Moses was not the author of the first five books of the Bible is supported by evidence of the most conclusive sort. How could he have written the eulogy on himself, or the account of his death, recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy? How can one harmonize the conflicting legal codes of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, if Moses drafted all three?[1] How could he have said in Deuteronomy, that Levites are on a basis of equality with priests, and in Leviticus have accorded them a lower rank? How

[1] Exod. 21-23; Lev. 25, *et passim*, Deut. 5.

could he have written two sets of ten commandments differing from each other in several important particulars?[1] Why was there no "Levitical" conduct on the part of either priests or people prior to the year 450 B. C. if "Leviticus" was the work of Moses? Would the noblest and most God-fearing men in the nation, such as Hosea and the first Isaiah, have violated the second commandment had they known of it? We are forced to conclude that it originated centuries after Moses' day.

Again, it is certain that David did not write the Psalms that bear his name, because, on grounds of internal evidence, they must be assigned in part to the exile and in part to the Persian, Greek and Maccabean periods of Jewish history.

Concerning the Gospels, we now know that they were not the work of eye-witnesses, but the product of a complex process of formation that began with the Aramaic, oral transmission of remembered incidents in Jesus' life and of sayings from his discourses, the whole committed to writing, sifted, edited

[1] Compare Exod. 20 with Deut. 5.

and translated into Greek only after Jesus had been dead for thirty or forty years. And so cumulative is the evidence regarding the reliability of the record that we are warranted in believing our Gospels approximate the original words of Jesus and the historic incidents of his life to a remarkable and gratifying degree.

Of Paul's genuine epistles the higher criticism recognizes, in the New Testament, not more than four—those to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the two to the Corinthians. The book of Acts is found to disagree in many points with statements made in the genuine epistles of Paul. Moreover, its passion for conciliating the two conflicting parties in the early church, representing the Jewish and the Pauline interpretations of Christianity, indicates that the book belongs to a generation later than that of Peter and Paul.

Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, is not, however, the latest in the collection. Rather was it written toward the close of Domitian's reign, about 95 A. D., as was already believed in the time of Irenæus,

who recorded a tradition assigning the book to this period. Far from being a literary unit, this apocalypse is the result of literary accretion and includes, as Harnack has shown, a Jewish apocalypse in five of its chapters.[1]

Such are some of the results relating to Bible books upon which practical unanimity among representatives of the higher criticism has been reached. Why do these results appear to many minds revolutionary? It is because they are unaware of the steps by which the results were reached. The ninety-five theses Luther nailed on the church door in Wittenberg must have looked revolutionary in the extreme to the ordinary passer-by. But to persons acquainted with the writings of Luther's immediate predecessors, Wessel and Goch, these theses brought no terror, for all are to be found within these earlier works. Darwin's "Origin of Species" looked revolutionary enough in 1859 to most American and English readers. What did they know of earlier thinkers on the problem of evolution? But

[1] Rev. 11-13; 17; 18.

to those who had read the works of Erasmus Darwin, Robert Chambers, Lamarck, Buffon, Goethe and Kant, the declarations of Charles Darwin represented but the latest stage in a process of scientific philosophizing that had been in progress for centuries and would not end with the "Origin of Species." Birds, to a spectator in Tertiary times, might well have seemed "revolutionary" had he been familiar with only fishes and reptiles. But in our museums are exhibited specimens of fossilized creatures, worthy to be called either avian reptiles or reptilian birds, the intermediary types that mark the slow transition from reptiles to true birds in the evolution of animal life.

So with these results of the higher criticism. To people unfamiliar with the slow, successive steps by which they were attained, they seem startling and even revolutionary, but they cease to appear so the moment their genesis and history have been traced. Then, too, does the serious, reverent, constructive purpose of the higher criticism come into clearer view. Far from necessitating the relinquishment of cherished religious affilia-

tions, the higher criticism has, among its leading expositors, both at home and abroad, clergymen of various Christian persuasions who feel no compunction about retaining their posts and whose right to remain where they are has never been invaded. Canon Cheyne of Rochester Cathedral, England; Canon Driver of Christ Church, Oxford; the Presbyterian Doctors of Divinity, Bruce and Davidson in Scotland; in our own country the Episcopalian, J. P. Peters; the Presbyterian, Francis Brown; the Congregationalist, George F. Moore—these will serve to illustrate the point.

These scholars perceive the inestimable value to religion of frank, fearless study of Bible literature. They feel that whatever modifications of personal religious belief the results of scholarship may require, such changes will be certain to prevail, and with a minimum of mental disturbance, because the higher criticism is essentially constructive in purpose. These men rightly hold that the real spiritual value of a Bible book abides, let the higher criticism discover what it may.

Has the spiritual worth of the "Imitation of Christ" declined now that scepticism has arisen as to whether or not à Kempis was its author? A *vade mecum* for those who would live "the life of the spirit" that manual of meditation will remain, though criticism of its source disproves the traditional authorship. Suppose it were true that Bacon wrote the plays ascribed to Shakspere—and there is some measure of plausibility in the Baconian position—would these dramas lose any of their inherent and immortal power to serve the higher ends of human life? Will any Christian congregations cease to sing certain hymns that bore Charles Wesley's name, now that it has been discovered they were not composed by him? Because the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount are found in pre-Christian Jewish literature and therefore did not originate with Jesus, have they lost their life-giving value and Jesus all claim to originality? Shall we not still turn to the Psalms and to the Ten Commandments, though David and Moses may no longer be identified with their authorship? Did the geologist and the

astronomer, asks Dr. Crooker, profane the heavens and the earth when they banished from planets and stars, mountains and rivers the divinities with which a superstitious reverence had endowed them? Nay, for the heavens and the earth are still the dwelling place of the Mysterious and the Eternal.

Similarly the apostles of the higher criticism did not profane the Bible when they banished a superstitious reverence for it, brought order out of chaos, arranged the books in their chronological order and interpreted what had long been obscure or meaningless. On the contrary they rendered an illuminating service the beneficent reaction of which on the religious nature has already made itself felt wherever the achievements of the higher criticism are known. It has enabled us to see, as never before, the divine element in the Bible by the appeal which it makes to what is divine in us, the thumb-prints and the penciled passages proving the continued power of the Bible to satisfy the heart, to comfort its sorrows, calm its tempests and fill its emptiness with a message of courage and of hope.

II

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Our chief sources of information concerning the life and teaching of Jesus are the first three Gospels, called the "Synoptics" because of their common viewpoint, forming a unitary group. The Fourth Gospel, though of inestimable value as an interpretation of Jesus, is not primarily a historical or biographical work. For this reason, and for others which will be discussed in a later lecture, we are compelled to confine our attention to the Synoptics. And even in our use of these the utmost caution must be exercised, for the real Jesus appears only beneath one or another bias, or *tendenz,* as the Germans call it, to which all three Gospels bear witness. Here we touch one of those important discoveries which have re-

sulted from application of the method of the higher criticism to the records.

In view of the prolonged, patient, reverent research which has brought significant results to light, we cannot any longer treat these gospels as though no discoveries had been made. Surely our only honorable and worthy course is frankly and bravely to recognize these discoveries and then adjust our conception of the gospels and of Jesus to the discovered facts. Only harm can come to religion from refusing to look facts in the face. Nor, in my judgment, is there anything more calculated to keep young people away from church and make them indifferent to religion than the suspicion that they are being trifled with, that ministers are hedging and beating about the bush, instead of frankly telling their congregations what they have discovered. I hold that our only safety lies in manfully facing verified truths and fearlessly adjusting our thought to them. Moreover, if our appreciation of Jesus is to have a solid basis in historical fact, it must be an appreciation that can stand the light of discoveries. And this point is of particu-

lar importance just now, when the very historicity of Jesus is being questioned. The claim to have demonstrated the non-reality of the historical Jesus, as urged by Prof. Arthur Drews in Germany and by Prof. W. B. Smith of Tulane University, New Orleans, is still quite inadequately supported. Not to enter at this time upon a criticism of the work of these scholars, let it suffice to observe that hitherto it has been altogether negative in character and content. Neither scholar has thus far faced the *positive* reasons on which our belief in the historic Jesus is built; for example, the priority of persons to the legends concerning them; the type of Messiah which the gospels depict, so radically different from the popular idea, and which can be accounted for only on the assumption that an actual Jesus embodied the type; the triumph of Christianity over its most powerful rival in the Roman empire because its hero was not an ethereal abstraction like Mithra, but an actual person who "went about doing good." Not until these two leading advocates of the non-historicity of Jesus address themselves to these and

other positive aspects of the question shall we be justified in holding that we have as yet a single valid reason for disbelieving in an historical Jesus.

Coming now to the question of Jesus' birth, let us recognize at the outset that the subject is not to be taken up merely because of any intellectual or speculative interest it may have, but because of its ethical and practical implications. Had the subject none other than an intellectual interest, I should deem it an unwarranted waste of time to discuss it from this platform. It is because our ideas of God and of law, of man's origin and nature and of the essential sanctity of human procreation are all bound up with the *way* we think Jesus was born, that we are devoting a lecture to the subject. Let it be further recognized that the question *how* Jesus was born is a question of fact, of history, and as such it has to be treated like every other question, in the light of the evidence adduced in support of it.

For myself, permit me to say that I have no prejudice for or against any particular view. I cannot imagine a free truth-seeker

being prejudiced for or against a particular conclusion on any question. His sole and supreme desire must be to know what the truth is and let prejudices and predilections be adjusted to it, whatever it may be. And this, I take it, represents also the spirit and attitude in which you approach the subject. Let us then examine the available evidence, let us summon, in chronological order, those persons who lived prior to the middle of the second century of our era (using this as a convenient *terminus ad quem*), and from whom some word on the subject might be reasonably expected.

And wherever evidence is adduced let us note both the *nature* of the testimony offered and the measure of *value* we are justified in attaching to it.

Beginning with Jesus himself, we find that he is nowhere represented as alluding to the subject. On the other hand, there are passages in the Gospels which seem to point to his belief in a purely human origin of himself, as of the other members of the family. Indeed, the language in which he is quoted as addressing his mother positively

precludes the possibility of his having regarded her as differentiated from all other mothers.[1]

Nor does Mary make any allusion to the birth of Jesus. Yet the earliest of the Gospels (Mark) attributes to her (as to others) the words, "He is beside himself," words which it would hardly seem she could have said of Jesus had she thought of him as miraculously born.[2]

We come next, in order, to the Apostle Paul, earliest of the New Testament writers. He died about thirty-five years after Jesus. His letters were written between the years 50 and 64 A. D., the first of them (Galatians) twenty years before the earliest of the Gospels. Though uncertainty still attaches to the authorship of many of the epistles ascribed to him, the letter to the Galatians and that to the Romans are generally conceded to be genuine productions of the Apostle. It is in these, and these only, that Paul makes mention of Jesus' birth, and when we read what is there writ-

[1] See Matt. 12 : 48; Mark 3 : 33; Luke 2 : 48, 49; cf. John 2 : 4.

[2] Mark 3 : 21b, 31.

ten we observe that not only does he make no allusion to a "virgin" birth, but distinctly affirms the altogether natural origin of Jesus. "Made of the seed of David, according to the flesh," are the words he used in his letter to the Romans.[1]

And in his letter to the Galatians, Paul puts the mode of Jesus' birth in such a form as to indicate that it behooved him to be born in the same way as those who were to be redeemed, "made of a woman, made under the law."[2] Yet what an incalculable advantage it would have been for the apostle if, in presenting his theory of Jesus as the Saviour of mankind, he could have backed it with an account of a supernatural birth! Certainly if there already existed in his time such a belief, Paul would have known it. He was, you will remember, the guest of Jesus' disciple, Peter, and for the space of a fortnight in Jerusalem.[3] During that visit he must have learned everything of vital importance concerning Jesus and assuredly of

[1] Rom. 1 : 3.
[2] Gal. 4 : 4.
[3] Gal. 1 : 18.

a miraculous-birth story, had such existed. It would thus seem that prior to the year 64, the year of Paul's death, belief in a supernatural birth of Jesus was not in circulation.

If now we turn to the so-called "triple tradition," *i. e.,* the story of Jesus' life in which the first three Gospels agree, we find they are not at one regarding the nature of his birth. For while Matthew and Luke contain a virgin-birth story, Mark has no birth story whatever. On the other hand, all three Gospels contain an account of Jesus' baptism, and all three represent Jesus as *then* receiving "the Holy Spirit." Whereas, if these writers had known of a virgin birth of Jesus they would necessarily have identified his receiving the Holy Spirit with that miraculous event, and not with his baptism. Hence, we are forced to conclude (and the point will shortly be dwelt upon more fully) that the birth-narratives of Matthew and Luke formed no part of their original text, but were added at a later day.

Next, in the order of authorities to be consulted, is the author of the Gospel accord-

ing to Mark, written about the year 70 A. D. Here, once more, we find no allusion to a virgin birth. Would this writer, the earliest of all our biographers of Jesus, have begun his record with the baptism of Jesus and omitted the narrative of a virgin birth, had it been current in his day? Nay more, would he have mentioned Jesus as one of four brothers[1] if he believed him to have been born in an altogether different way from that in which they came into the world? And our conviction that the writer of this Gospel knew nothing of any such difference is considerably reënforced when we compare his version with that in the other two Gospels of the familiar proverb regarding the indifference with which a prophet is treated in the locality where he is known. In Mark's version we read: "A prophet is not without honor but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." But in the versions of Matthew and Luke the phrase *and among his own kin* is significantly omitted, because to have retained it would have been wholly incompatible with

[1] Mark 6 : 3, 4.

the presence in these Gospels of a virgin-birth story. A prophet who had been miraculously born would certainly not be without honor "among his own kin."[1]

Passing by, for a moment, the testimony of the third and fourth authorities in chronological order, the authors of the gospels according to "Matthew" and "Luke," let us note the testimony of the author of the Fourth Gospel, written about the year 120 A. D. The date of this book is still debated, but the increasing tendency among representatives of the higher criticism is to assign it to the first quarter of the second century. Here, again, no reference is made to a virgin birth, but twice in the course of the record Jesus is addressed as "the son of Joseph," and on neither occasion does he contradict it.[2]

What an immense advantage it would have been to the author of the Fourth Gospel could he have introduced into his interpretation of Jesus as "the Word" incarnate, the statement that he was miraculously born!

[1] Compare Matt. 13 : 57, Luke 4 : 24, and Mark 6 : 4.
[2] John 1 : 45; 6 : 42.

Prof. Scott in his monograph on this Gospel[1] takes the ground that the author "must certainly have known the tradition of the virgin birth." But we are prompted to reply, if that tradition was regarded as of recent origin in Justin's time,—some twenty years later than the date now generally accepted for the Fourth Gospel,—may it not be fairly doubted whether the doctrine of the virgin birth was known to this evangelist? Again, Prof. Scott remarks that the author of the Fourth Gospel "replaced the virgin birth doctrine by that of the incarnation of the Word." But a doctrine of Christ's origin as "the eternal Son of God" can scarcely be regarded as "replacing" a doctrine of his origin as "man." What we read in the prologue[2] of this gospel can hardly be construed as a *substitute* for the hypothesis of a miraculous birth.

The fact that the Fourth Gospel deals with a unique interpretation of the person of Jesus and contains no virgin-birth story to explain his temporary human manifestation

[1] E. F. Scott: "The Fourth Gospel," pp. 43, 187.

[2] John 1 : 1-18.

would seem to indicate that the story was unknown to the author, more especially as just such a story harmonizes with his conception of Jesus as "the only begotten Son."

Keeping within the first two centuries of our era, we come next to a group of early Christian Fathers who flourished toward the close of the first century: Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch. We read their "letters" and search in vain for any allusion to a virgin birth of Jesus. On the other hand we observe that all three of these Fathers discuss the doctrine of the incarnation, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth was the embodiment of God. But none of the grounds on which they argue in support of this belief concerns the nativity of Jesus. How it would have strengthened their position could they have availed themselves of a belief in his miraculous birth! In the absence of any reference to it we seem driven to the conclusion that even as late as the year 100 the belief in the virgin birth of Jesus was not yet known to the Christian church.

It is in the writings of Justin the Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the sec-

ond century, that we meet, *for the first time,* a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus. But note what Justin says on the subject. He refers to it as a newly-presented doctrine, and when asked if he believed it, replied by pointing to the Romans and the Greeks, who held a corresponding belief about the origin of their heroes, and urging this fact as sufficient ground for a like belief in the supernatural paternity of Jesus. Was it not believed that Plato was the son of Apollo and Periktione, that Augustus was born of Jupiter and Attia, that Julius Cæsar was born in the temple of Apollo, the son of a God? How much more then might this be contended in the case of Jesus the Christ? Such, in substance, was Justin's thought as he worked it out in his "Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew." Thus it appears that down to the year 140 not a single Christian writer, excepting the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, makes any reference to a virgin birth of Jesus. But when we turn to those two sources, we find that in several important particulars they are mutually contradictory and hopelessly irreconcilable. Close and

careful study of their discrepancies has led many critics to the conclusion that the opening chapters of the First and Third Gospels formed no part of the original record, but were given a place in it after the middle of the second century. If this opinion be correct—and it has the support of a host of eminent scholars—it follows that were we in possession of a New Testament manuscript written early in the third century or toward the close of the second century, we should not find these chapters part of the record, proving them to have been interpolated, precisely as other passages are universally conceded to have been added to the original record. Conspicuous among these are the resurrection narrative at the end of the Gospel of Mark[1], the famous passage so often used as a proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity,[2] and the closing clause of the Lord's Prayer.[3] All of these passages are missing in the two earliest extant manuscripts of the New Testament, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, written about 350 A. D.

[1] Mark 16 : 9-20. [2] I John 5 : 7.
[3] Matt. 6 : 13.

If I were conducting an "adults' study-class," it would be interesting and instructive to enter upon a detailed examination of the birth-narratives in Matthew and Luke. Suffice it for our present purpose to fix attention upon only the three most telling points.

In the first place, we note that, while both evangelists present genealogies of Jesus, they are not only contradictory and mutually exclusive, but, what is strangest of all, they trace Jesus' ancestry by *Joseph's* pedigree, not through that of Mary. This would indicate that the authors regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph and that these genealogies were prepared *before* the virgin-birth story had come into existence. For, a writer who believes that Jesus was born of a virgin would have no object in tracing his genealogy through the pedigree of a human father. We have no alternative but to believe that these genealogies were compiled prior to the story of the virgin birth.

Again, in the sixteenth verse of the first chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, we read: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who

is called Christ." But in the so-called "Sinaitic-Syriac" manuscript, a palimpsest, discovered on Mount Sinai in 1892 by Mrs. Agnes Lewis and revealing a Syriac version which is now our earliest witness to the text of the gospels, we find this verse rendered as follows: "Jacob begat Joseph. Joseph, to whom was espoused the Virgin Mary, begat Jesus, who is called Christ."

In other words, in this, our ultimate source of appeal, we have it explicitly stated that Joseph *begat* Jesus (as Jacob begat Joseph), thus testifying to belief in the human paternity of Jesus. The third feature of these narratives, worthy of special note, is the mistranslation of the Hebrew word "almah," as "a virgin," in the quotation from Isaiah which the writer of the Gospel of Matthew cites in the twenty-third verse of his first chapter in order to confirm his belief that the Old Testament prefigured the birth of Jesus without a human father. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and shall call his name Immanuel."[1] And the context plainly shows that the Hebrew

[1] Isa. 7 : 14.

prophet referred not to some far-off, divine event, much less to a Messiah, though the evangelist put this interpretation upon the passage he quoted. Just what was it, then, that Isaiah meant to convey? His sovereign, Ahaz, King of Judah, is despondent over the impending attack of the allied enemies, Israel and Syria. The prophet comes to instil courage and faith into the king's heart, and he succeeds by saying that before a boy, to whom a young woman has just given birth, would have time to learn the difference between good and evil, the land of the enemy would be deserted. And so this mother, from sheer joy over Yahweh's concern for the well-being of his people, calls the babe "Immanuel" (God with us) as a token of her abiding trust in the permanence of His protecting care.

It should be always remembered when reading quotations such as this, that the Synoptic writers believed Jesus was the Messiah and, so believing, they wrote their biographies from this standpoint. And, thinking that the Old Testament contained accounts of Messiah, they instinctively turned to it,

either to confirm what they had already learned concerning Jesus, or to supply information on points concerning which no data were at hand. Moreover, when once the process of idealizing Jesus had started, and he became identified with the Messiah, it was but natural that his birth should be interpreted in terms of the marvelous. In other words, we account for the rise of belief in the miraculous birth of Jesus in accordance with that law of legendary growth which has ever been operative in all religions. Given, the moral and spiritual greatness of Jesus, the adoration and love which that greatness inspired; given the belief that Jesus is the Messiah; given also an interval of thirty-five years between his death and the appearance of the earliest of the Gospels, during which the legendarizing process grew, and the conditions were provided to produce the wonder-stories of his birth and childhood, his entrance upon his chosen calling, his ministry and his death, as we find them in the familiar Gospel forms.

Within the limit prescribed for these lectures it has not been possible to do more than

briefly consult those sources of information regarding the birth of Jesus from which light could be expected. We have seen that Jesus, Mary his mother, Paul, the triple-tradition, the Gospel of Mark, the Fourth Gospel, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, make no mention of a miraculous birth of Jesus. Only two of the eleven leading informants in the first century and a half of our era report a virgin-birth story—the authors of the first and third Gospels, written within a decade or two of each other toward the close of the first century. And not the least significant feature of these gospels is the fact that, whereas their opening chapters report a miraculous birth of Jesus, it is subsequently contradicted, by implication, in several passages,[1] thereby compelling the conviction that these opening chapters were no part of the original record. And since Justin was the first of the Fathers to make allusion to the belief in a miraculous birth of Jesus, and referred to it as something new, we infer that the first and second chapters of the Gospels according to Mat-

[1] Matt. 12 : 48; Luke 2 : 33-50; 3 : 23 ("as was supposed").

thew and Luke were incorporated about the middle of the second century.

From time to time books have appeared whose authors have attempted to demonstrate a Buddhistic origin for the virgin-birth story, but the arguments adduced are defective at so many points as to be wholly inconclusive. Furthermore, we have no evidence whatever of the existence of any of the alleged "channels" through which Buddhism influenced primitive Christianity. The testimony of the late Max Müller is decisive on this point. "I have been looking," he wrote in the second volume of his "Essays," "for such channels all my life, but have found none. What I have found is that there are historical antecedents for the startling coincidences in the birth stories of Jesus and of the Buddha. If we know these antecedents the coincidences become far less startling." Nor, again, is it in the least necessary to appeal to a foreign source for what we read in the Gospel narratives of Jesus' birth. All the details of the two virgin-birth stories were furnished on Palestinian soil by ancient traditions, and, above all, by familiarity with

the Old Testament, the repository of "Messianic" predictions whose fulfilment, it was believed, was made manifest in the life of Jesus. Under the stress of this controlling idea—the fulfilment of prophecy—practically all the elements in the birth stories were shaped. It determined Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus. It brought the magi to the manger with their gifts and under guidance of a star. It settled the place of Joseph's flight, for had not Hosea said: "I . . . called my son out of Egypt"?[1] Did not the prophet Micah predict that "out of thee (Bethlehem) shall he come forth . . . that is to be ruler of Israel"?[2] And is it not written in the book of Numbers, "there shall come a Star out of Jacob"? True, in none of these passages was there any such import intended. But the evangelists did not limit their treatment of Scripture by the original sense of its contents. Rather did they employ the Rabbinical method, which drew from every suggestive passage the particular meaning that was required, so eager were

[1] Hos. 11 : 1.
[2] Mic. 5 : 2.

they to secure confirmation for their story in prophecy. Clearly there is no need to supply a pagan substratum for the various elements of the Gospel narratives of Jesus' birth, for all have their clear roots in the ideas and phrases of Hebrew scripture.[1] And by as much as the moral elements in Buddha and Zoroaster, and other great religious leaders have many traits in common, it ought not to be surprising that poetic imagination created stories of their birth and childhood akin to what we read in the Gospels. We account for the rise of all such stories, partly in terms of the transcendent personality of which they tell and partly in terms of the popular assumption, universal among the ancients, that characters of exceptional worth must have had a supernatural origin. Thus do the legends that have gathered about these great leaders testify at once to their exalted character and to the reverence and love it created in the hearts of their biographers.

Analyze in detail, if you will, the Gospel story of the nativity, call attention to the physical impossibility of a star being tem-

[1] Num. 24 : 17.

porarily stationed over a particular hamlet, designating with precision the particular stable; note the unhistorical allusions to Herod's decree and to the taking of a census; insist that shepherds would not be "watching their flocks by night" in December, and that "magi" would not have found it practicable to take so long a journey in that rainy season; but pray do not fail to see the meaning of these picturesque details. This myth of the moving, guiding star, what is it but a transcription of the popular conviction that Jesus, having been exceptionally great, must have been ushered into the world under divine auspices? And the journey of the "magi" bringing their gifts, what is it but a symbol of the desire of Jesus' contemporaries to do all in their power to celebrate his coming into the world?

Read the exquisite legend as history, and at every turn reason and the sense of historical veracity rebel. Read it as religious poetry, or drama, and at once the "opened heavens" suggest no impossible parting of sky, but a real illumination of the minds and hearts of the first Christians; the angel-

presences, no visible forms, but the spiritual qualities of faith, hope, and charity, which the Gospel of Jesus had awakened in men's hearts; the heavenly anthem, no audible song from above, but an echo from within of the beatitudes and the parables. And in thus preserving the truth of the legend while rejecting its form, we insure the permanent appeal of the Christmas festival, securing it against the possibility of either becoming obsolete or of losing its power to stir and gladden the heart. And all the poetic associations of Christmas, its pure joys and tender memories, its fraternal congratulations and spontaneous charities, its actual endeavors at living the life of goodwill and peace—all these combine to create a firmer and more enduring stronghold for Christianity than the creeds of the churches and the centuries.

It was at Rome in the fourth century and after prolonged controversy, that December twenty-fifth was finally decided upon as the birthday of Jesus. The immediate reason for so late a settlement of this long-debated question was that Judaism, out of which Chris-

tianity sprang, had no feast-day in its calendar that could be Christianized into a celebration of the birth of Jesus, as was the Passover into Easter. In view of the belief, held by the followers of Jesus, that he would soon return to earth, questions pertaining to his birth and ancestry, his childhood and youth were of little interest. Attention was centered upon his second coming. But toward the middle of the second century, as the hope of his return grew steadily weaker, speculation on these subjects grew rife. Various Christian communities ventured to assign a date for the nativity, but in no two instances was the date the same. Aware of these differences, a French writer some years ago wrote a book showing that every month in the year had at some time, somewhere, been settled upon as the month in which Jesus was born. Finally, however, the community at Rome succeeded in getting December twenty-fifth universally accepted. Two reasons were operative in the selection of this date. First, because from very early times it had been observed as "the birthday of the unconquerable sun," a "heathen" fes-

tival following directly upon the longest night of the winter solstice. Again, the Roman Saturnalia, a week devoted to unrestrained rejoicing and merry-making, reached its climax about December twenty-fifth. This festival was held in honor of the "Golden Age" which the Romans placed in a far-off past. It was a season of unbounded hospitality and good fellowship, and in our modern Christmas celebrations many of the features of the Saturnalia have been preserved. In so far as the choice of the Christian church was influenced by these "heathen" celebrations it showed wisdom and tact. For, if the heathen were to be converted to Christianity, it was eminently desirable that their customs and beliefs should not be ruthlessly discarded, but, as far as possible, adopted and adapted to Christian requirements. Was not Jesus called "the Light of the World?" Had he not been spoken of as "the Sun of Righteousness?" Could there be any other event in Christian history more calculated to stir sentiments of joy and goodwill than the birth of Jesus? What more natural and diplomatic choice, therefore, could Christian mission-

aries to the heathen have made than December twenty-fifth? Hence, ever since the year 325 or thereabouts, Christmas has been celebrated on this day, and January sixth, on which a joint celebration of Jesus' birthday and "the Epiphany" had previously been held, was reserved for the latter festival alone.

Reverting to the wonder-stories of the Gospels, and particularly to the virgin-birth story, it must be clear what the attitude of the thoughtful reader toward them will be.

Far from discarding them as worthless myths, he will treasure them among the supreme proofs preserved to us of the moral and spiritual greatness of Jesus and of the reverence and love which that greatness provoked in the hearts of his contemporaries and biographers. Had Jesus been a man of smaller mould, no such birth-stories would ever have been written concerning him. Wonder-tales are never told of commonplace people. It was because Jesus transcended the limits of ordinary, average human nature that there grew up around his personality

the significant legends of the Gospels and of the "Apocrypha."

Hence these birth stories, while not at all records of his origin, are yet spontaneous products of the influence exerted by his own great life. They are not histories of fact, but symbols of the quality of his person. They are poetic expressions of the popular faith that, being so unusual a character, Jesus must have been born in an unusual way. They represent that "truth of poetry which is more than the truth of history," as Aristotle taught. They are first-class historical accounts in the sense that they furnish proof, and to a greater degree than aught else, of the moral and spiritual grandeur of him who called them forth. To-day, it is true, the law of legendary growth would preclude the rise of a virgin-birth story concerning any transcendent personality, not merely because the notion contradicts the recognized conditions of human origination, but more because it does violence to the sanctity attaching to the holiest of human mysteries. Assuredly it did not occur to the first and third evangelists that, while their birth-stories did honor to

Jesus, they cast a slur on fatherhood. Yet, for us, in the modern world, there can be no other view.

So wonderful and universal is the fact of sex and so increasingly pronounced does it become the higher we ascend in the scale of animal life, that we are constrained to regard it as an *ordained condition* of being. Who knows but what biology may yet warrant the saying, "no sex, no life." Hence, to think a virgin birth "holier" than that which is ordained as a law of being, as a condition of existence, is to cast a slur upon both fatherhood and motherhood.

But, to revert to the Gospel-legend and the inspirations that produced it, let us see to it that, instead of echoing the shallow criticism which fancies it has revealed the total truth about these birth stories when it has stigmatized them "the worthless product of an age steeped in superstition," we recognize with gratitude their imperishable worth and appraise them for what they really are,—testimonies to the transcendent qualities of Jesus' character and life. Let us set these spiritual songs and these poetical tableaux

which make up the Gospel narratives of Jesus' birth, by the side of the splendid organ-chant of Milton's "Nativity," and the beautiful pictures of Raphael and Botticelli, Correggio and Leonardo. Then shall we find in it deep inexhaustible meaning, see in it that "truth of poetry" which is "more than the truth of history." And when we wish to refresh our sense of the essential greatness of Jesus, we will turn to this legend, give ourselves up to its charm, and inhale the delicate perfume of these first garlands of reverence and love, woven by Gospel-writers around the infant Nazarene.

III

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

We saw in the preceding lecture that only two of the earliest sources of information concerning Jesus contain a virgin-birth story. The gospels according to Matthew and Luke devote their two opening chapters to such a story. But what we read in subsequent chapters of these gospels is so at variance with the conception of a miraculous birth as to compel the conclusion that the writers knew nothing of it whatsoever. Indeed there seems no alternative left to us but to believe that a virgin-birth story was prefixed to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the second or third decade of the second century, when the idealizing impulse, already well developed during Jesus' own life-time, originated a theory of his non-natural birth. Such, at

least, is the conviction to which the latest results of the higher criticism of the gospels lead.

In order to connect our study of the temptation of Jesus with that of the mode of his birth, let us briefly review the records relating to the place and date of his birth, his childhood and education, his choice of a vocation and the ceremony of self-consecration to his chosen calling. The higher criticism points to Nazareth as the birthplace of Jesus and to 4 B. C. as approximately the year in which he was born. The chief reason for the former conclusion is furnished by the illuminating controversy recorded in the seventh chapter of the Fourth Gospel. Here we find one of Jesus' audiences divided as to the nature of his person. Those opposed to the belief that he was the Messiah took the ground that "this man is from Nazareth" (Galilee); consequently Jesus could not be the Messiah (Christ) because the Old Testament had declared that from Bethlehem, David's city, the Messiah would come. "So there was a division among the people because of him." In other words, the

actual birth-place of Jesus is set over against the theoretical birth-place required by Jewish belief.

The particular value of the debate lies in its revelation of the *process* by which Bethlehem found its way into the gospel tradition, as against Nazareth.

Two passages from the Gospels enable us to fix the date of Jesus' birth as not later than 2 B. C. and not earlier than 4 B. C.. In the first verse of the second chapter of Matthew we are told that Jesus was born "in the days of Herod the King." This is equivalent to saying he was born in or prior to 4 B. C., Herod's reign having extended from 37 to 4 B. C. Turning to Luke's data we note the statement that the Baptist began his ministry in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius," *i. e.*, in the year 28 A. D., and that Jesus was then "about thirty years of age." From this we infer that 2 B. C. was the date of his birth.[1] Elsewhere in the same Gospel[2] the date is identified with that of a taxation-census ordered by the Syrian Governor Cy-

[1] Luke 3 : 1, 23.
[2] Luke 2 : 1-3.

renius. But this, according to the Roman historians, occurred in 6 A. D., when Herod had been dead ten years. Moreover, this census would not have included Galilee, according to Roman law, as this province was under Antipas and not Cyrenius. Nor would the census have been taken at the ancestral home but at the actual home of the Roman subjects. Consequently, we conclude that either in the year of Herod's death, or within two years of it, Jesus was born.

Of his infancy the Apocryphal Gospels relate a number of incidents, but all critics are agreed upon the wholly unreliable, spurious character of these stories. Yet they are not void of value on that account. As fanciful productions they bear witness to a recognized spiritual greatness of Jesus. In other words, it was felt that even the infancy of one so exceptionally great must have been marked by features unique and marvelous. Hence, the creation, with the aid of Old Testament narratives, of a "Gospel of the Infancy."

Thus do these stories illustrate once more Aristotle's statement that there is a truth of

art which means vastly more than the truth of mere history.

Of the childhood of Jesus we have no reliable information whatsoever. The Apocryphal Gospels furnish a number of extraordinary wonder-stories to which no credibility can be attached. Apart from these we have but the familiar incident recorded by Luke,[1] of the boy of twelve, discovered in the temple discussing religious questions with doctors of the law. Without pausing to analyze this story in detail, suffice it to say that, as it stands, it can hardly be accepted as historical. It may have a basis in some actual occurrence, but in the form in which it has come down to us it is clearly legendary, a conclusion to which we are forced not so much by the prodigy which Jesus here appears to be—for history is replete with parallels; witness what Mozart, Pope, and, just recently, the boy Sidis at Harvard, achieved before they entered their teens—but by the exceedingly unnatural attitude of the parents toward their child and his toward them. How could they be all day en route from Je-

[1] Luke 2 : 41-52.

rusalem to Nazareth without missing the boy till the evening halt?[1] Or how could it have taken three days to find him? How could Jesus show no realization of their anxiety when, after three days' sorrowful search, they at last find him?[2] How could he have expressed no delight in seeing them again after so prolonged a separation, but, instead, have spoken the strangely sounding words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Is there not a touch of the unfilial in the tone of this reply to parents who had agonized over his long disappearance? For aught we know the story may be the invention of a pious disciple familiar with the narratives of Samuel, and wishing to lift the veil that hung over the childhood of Jesus found in these material at hand for his purpose. What is here said of Jesus had been already said of Samuel: "He increased and grew and was in favor with God and man."[3] And Josephus is authority for the statement that "in his twelfth year" Samuel first received his prophetic call.

[1] Luke 2 : 46. [2] Luke 2 : 48.
[3] I Sam. 1 : 18, 19.

Of the education Jesus received we know nothing directly. We can but infer from scattered passages in the Old and New Testaments what that education must have been. Besides the light thrown on the question by occasional verses in the Pentateuch and the Talmud touching the requirements of the Law in matters of education, we gain additional information from Josephus and from the Apocrypha. We know that there were no public schools in Palestine till the year 65 A. D., and that all Jewish children were educated first at home, by the mother, and then at the Synagogue, by the reader, or "hazzan."

"The child is best educated which has been taught by its mother," says the Talmud. From her the child learned elementary reading, the rudiments of Jewish Scripture, beginning with the "Shema," so-called because the verse opens with that word. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."[1] Add to these the traditions of the nation, handed down, by oral repetition, from father to son. This home teaching was supplemented by the

[1] Deut. 6 : 4.

education received at the Synagogue, where the "hazzan," or reader, taught the children the sacred law in which all civil and religious duties were set forth. To this was added instruction in the past history of the nation. Very few families possessed an entire copy of the Law, but it appears to have been not uncommon for a "roll" of one of the prophets or selections from the psalms to have been possessed by the poorer families. How well Jesus was trained in the directions required in his day is indicated by several references in the Gospels. He stands up in the synagogue at Nazareth to read, and the Hebrew vowelless scroll yields its meaning to him at once, and he forthwith proves himself practised in the art of interpreting the sacred text.

The Hebrew prophets, with their terrible invectives against idolatry and sin, kindled the moral enthusiasm of Jesus; the Psalms developed in him the spiritual sentiments of reverence, awe, aspiration, worship, trust; while such Apocalypses as Daniel and Enoch acquainted him with the literary form in which the passionate hope of a Messianic

kingdom found expression. The larger culture acquired by traveled Jews who visited the royal library at Alexandria or who studied at Rome did not come within the range of Jesus' opportunity. At least there is nothing in any of the transmitted records to indicate that he ever went more than a few miles beyond the boundaries of Palestine. Of Greek language and literature he knew nothing. The Palestinian Talmud put its veto on such studies in the anathema, "Cursed be he who breeds swine and who teaches his son the wisdom of the Greeks." On the other hand, it is fairly certain that Jesus had acquaintance with the teachings of the famous Pharisee, Hillel, an old man when Jesus was a boy, president of the Sanhedrin or Supreme Court of the Jews, in the year 30 B. C. Hillel's "Judge not thy neighbor unless thou hast been in his place," reminds us of "judge not that ye be not judged." Hillel's, "Whoso would make his name great shall lose it," is but an earlier equivalent of Jesus' saying, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." His "Bless them that curse you," had its predecessor in

"Revile not when reviled," and the golden rule, as enunciated by Jesus, was exactly the same as expressed by Hillel. But Jesus advanced upon the ethics of Hillel by perceiving that the spirit or motive behind an act is what gives it moral worth. Thus it was reserved for Jesus to take this morality of the spirit out of the mass of Jewish legalism where Hillel had left it, and make it the corner-stone of his contribution to Judaism.

Besides the education which Jesus received from his mother at home and from the "hazzan" at the synagogue, he was further instructed in the trade of the carpenter. Here again the Talmud expounds the ancient Law of Deuteronomy, "He that teacheth not his son a trade is as bad as he that teacheth him to be a thief." As Paul followed the trade of tent-making, so Jesus adopted the carpenter trade, working in his father's shop, "a maker of ploughs and ox-yokes," says one of the uncanonical gospels. Nor is it a far-fetched hypothesis but an inference, warranted by modern knowledge of the relation of manual training to character, to believe that the trade Jesus adopted was an impor-

tant factor in his moral education, deepening his moral nature and giving added strength to those qualities of sincerity, and truthfulness, accuracy of thought and statement that are indirectly related to manual training.

Again, account must be taken of Jesus' residence at Capernaum, when considering the sources and content of his education, for this town was situated within easy walking distance of Nazareth, at the northeast corner of the Lake of Tiberias, and on the commercial highway leading from Syria to the Mediterranean and Egypt. Caravans from Asia Minor and even from Greece and Rome passed through Capernaum on their way to Arabia and the far East. A custom-house was situated there and a Roman garrison. There, too, it was that the public ministry of Jesus began, for he chose this nearest place to his home city as the headquarters for his missionary activity, leaving it in the morning and returning at night, or, at the close of each journey to a more distant town, returning eventually to Capernaum. During his residence at this commercial thoroughfare Jesus must have met Syrians, Greeks,

Persians, people of various lands, customs and religions. Such an experience would tend to develop in him catholicity and a keener sense of the universality of moral and religious sentiments, and of God as the Father, not of the Jews only, but of all mankind. Who knows but that the central idea in the parable of the Good Samaritan may not be traced to the experience and observation in cosmopolitan Capernaum.

Finally, Nature must be counted among the sources of Jesus' education, witness what we read in parable and in precept of the lilies and the cornfields, the ravens and the sparrows, the mountains and the sea.

In the absence of positive, direct information concerning the childhood and youth of Jesus, it is not strange that a number of theories should have originated as to his whereabouts and activities during this period. But not one of these theories, locating him in India, or in Egypt, or elsewhere outside of Palestine, has any valid evidence in its support. What the late Max Müller said, thirty years ago, is still true, that "not only are the historical channels" for relat-

ing Jesus with any country other than Palestine "altogether wanting," but there is also "no allusion" to him in any Buddhistic or Hindu literature of his time.[1]

The first public appearance of Jesus was as a young man, not yet thirty years of age, on the banks of the Jordan, where John the Baptist was conducting a ceremony symbolical of moral regeneration and the remission of sins. A baptism of repentance it was, directly related to the most vital belief of that time, the speedy coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, in which none but the penitent and reformed could dwell. According to all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus was baptized by John, the ceremony marking his assumption of a Messianic office followed by a temptation. To this acceptance of the Messianic office and the particular interpretation Jesus put upon it we shall return in a later chapter.

"Immediately," says the earliest of the evangelists, "the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild

[1] "Essays," 2d Series, chap. IV.

beasts (the guise in which demons were believed to appear), and angels ministered unto him." Such is the concise and simple account as given in the gospel of Mark. When we turn to the records of Matthew and Luke we observe what may be seen many times when the same incident has been reported by all three, namely that it grows with the telling as we pass from the earlier to the later documents, showing that in the process of transmission there occurred a heightening of the marvellous element in the story. Thus the earliest account is the simplest and shortest, consisting of but two verses, whereas Matthew's has eleven verses and Luke's fourteen, both Matthew and Luke amplifying Mark's simple narrative, and Luke introducing details not found in Matthew's account. This characteristic of the Synoptics, when all three tell the same story, is met with again and again, conspicuously in the "healing" narratives, as we shall see in the next lecture.

The Fourth Gospel contains no record of a temptation of Jesus, for the reason that such would have been incompatible with the

author's view of Jesus as the "Logos" or "Word," the "only begotten of the Father who dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." Such a one would of necessity be wholly above the reach of temptation. Turning to the story as told by Matthew and Luke, we read that Jesus fasted in the wilderness forty days, and, when almost overpowered by the severe ordeal, Satan came to him, bidding him appease the pangs of hunger by converting the desert-stones into bread. But Jesus repudiates the suggestion, quoting from the eighth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Whereupon the undaunted Satan suggests that Jesus, if he be indeed the Son of God, throw himself down from a pinnacle of the temple and see whether or not God will guard and save him. Again Satan is rebuffed, Jesus quoting from the sixth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Defeated a second time in the fulfillment of his evil designs, the Tempter now proffers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world

which are at his disposal, provided he will henceforth worship him. For the third time the Tempter is rebuffed and this time banished from the presence of Jesus with the words: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written (in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy) thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." And the narrative concludes with the statement that "angels came and ministered unto him"—the symbol of Divine approval.

Such is the story as we find it, in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. A weird, fanciful story it is, sketched with fine imaginative power and artistic skill; a story that testifies both to the myth-making fertility of the writers and to the spiritual greatness of Jesus, for of no average, ordinary man would such a story have been told. Jesus was so great as to have persuaded his contemporaries that he was born in an exceptional way and that he achieved an unparalleled triumph over Satan. Whatever historical basis the story may have had, the legendary elements were supplied from Old Testament narratives of the two great pre-

decessors of Jesus, Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets respectively. Of them both it has been recorded that they fasted forty days in the wilderness,[1] while of Israel in the wilderness it was written that for forty years they lived not by bread, but by food from Heaven.[2]

Additional material for the shaping of the temptation narratives was furnished by a number of current traditions. One of these was to the effect that Jesus was often hungry, nor would he hesitate, even on the Sabbath day, to pluck the ears of corn as he walked through the corn fields.[3] Another, and long established tradition among the Jews, was that Messiah would conquer Satan. The biographers of Jesus believed he was the Messiah, hence they drew the logical inference that Jesus had conquered Satan. Again, there was a tradition that associated with Jesus the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The prevalence of the passion among certain people for "signs"

[1] Exod. 24 : 18; I Kings 19 : 8.
[2] Exod. 16 : 35.
[3] Matt. 21 : 18; 12 : 1, passim.

whereby Jesus should demonstrate his Messiahship, this, too, must be counted among the traditions that contributed to the formation of the temptation legend. In seeking the historical facts of which this legend is the embellishment we have to remember that the experience related of Jesus had neither an eye-witness nor an ear-witness. No one was present to record what transpired. If, then, the story of the temptation has more than a Messianic source, it originated not only out of the belief that as Messiah Jesus had triumphed over Satan, but also out of an actual experience of spiritual struggle which, at a later day, he confided to his disciples, describing it in allegorical terms, easily misunderstood by confessedly dull minds. Hence, the story of the temptation is that of an agonizing spiritual experience translated into a series of grotesque incidents, an allegory converted into impossible history.

Certainly such an interpretation of what we read in the Synoptics is not at all unwarranted, witness the story of the cursing of the fig tree, which the higher criticism has

shown was originally a parable, slowly transformed in the course of successive oral transmissions into an alleged fact.[1]

The story of the temptation, we may well believe, is not a mere myth made solely from Messianic speculation, but rather a legend, distinguished from a myth in that it has a basis in reality. For a legend is an historical fact embellished with imaginary details. What, then, is the nucleus of truth in this legend? Jesus' baptism was to him a symbol of self-sanctification. It was emblematic of a purification of the innermost springs of action. It meant a devout self-dedication to the life of service. And the occasion for immediate entrance upon that life seems to have been furnished by the imprisonment of the Baptist (for having dared to rebuke the immoral King Herod). Yet the call to the ministry had already been heard and it would therefore be absurd to believe that but for this sudden termination of John's prophetic work, Jesus would not have become a public teacher. For him the baptism was a kind of ordination to the ministry, to be en-

[1] Mark 11 : 12; Matt. 21. Compare Luke 13 : 6-9.

tered seriously and solemnly as a particularly hallowed vocation. But at the very threshold he halts, hesitates, doubts, and forthwith retires to a solitary place for meditation, reflection, self-collecting and deeper consideration of the momentous issues which the assumption of the rôle of minister involves.

So was it with the Apostle Paul after his revolutionizing experience on the way to Damascus. He tells us in the very first of his Epistles, the one written to the Galatians, that when he had found himself converted from a persecutor to a champion of the Christ, he communed with not a single human soul, not even with the Apostles in Jerusalem, but went straightway into the wilderness beyond Damascus. What for? To reflect upon all that had transpired since his participation in the persecution of Stephen, to clarify and formulate new convictions, to dispel lingering doubts, to shape the new message of which he was to be the apostle, to decide upon the next step in his career.

What man is there who does not, before launching some great enterprise upon which

his whole destiny depends, pause and retire to some solitary place for self-scrutiny and dispassionate consideration of all that his enterprise involves? And only when he has thus given himself to solitude and reflection does he go forth and set his face towards the goal of his desire.

I take it that it was just such a lonely experience, marked by wrestlings of spirit, which Jesus underwent and which the authors of the Synoptic Gospels presented in objective spectacular form with the aid of contemporary demonology and angelology. Recall, for a moment, the conditions obtaining at the time Jesus resolved to enter the ministry, the obstacles and dangers that would beset him from the very start. Foremost in the religious field were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the two leading parties in the Judaism of that time. While it is true that the Pharisees, as a class, represented the best element in the community and that Jesus himself, had he identified himself with any party, would have belonged to the Pharisees, yet there were groups of them conspicuous for their mechanical conception of

religion, their formalism and hypocrisy, their scepticism and delight in hair-splitting distinctions touching precepts of the law. Jesus, representing a morality of the spirit, would of necessity be brought into conflict with these Pharisees.

The Sadducees, on the other hand, were the custodians of the ceremonial side of religion; they were identified with the temple services as were the Pharisees with the synagogue education. They represented the aristocracy of wealth as did the Pharisees the aristocracy of intellect. Wealthy, conservative, exclusive, they had opinions certain to antagonize a democratic, progressive thinker like Jesus.

Over against those two parties stood the masses, groaning under the yoke of Roman oppression and praying for deliverance by any hand at any price, whether by foul means or by fair. Here was a spirit to be curbed, tamed, transformed—a Herculean task for even the most optimistic of moral reformers. More serious perhaps than any of these obstacles was the prevailing popular conception of the Messiah, so different from that

which Jesus entertained. The populace looked for a political, industrial and social redeemer; their Messiah was a person equal to reinstating the prosperity and peace, the pomp and splendor of David's day. Jesus, on the other hand, had a totally different conception of the office and the title. To him it was synonymous with the suffering servant of Yahweh, described by the second Isaiah.[1] The Messiah's function in Jesus' thought was ethical and spiritual, not political and temporal. Here, then, in this recognized radical difference between his own and the popular conception of the Messiah, Jesus must have seen an obstacle second perhaps to none. Could he, as a moral and spiritual reformer, hope to succeed in the face of certain collision with the two leading traditional parties, and with the prospect of certain opposition from the people who espoused *traditional* Messianic expectations and who would look to him for their fulfillment? On the other hand, offsetting the consciousness of these obstacles, there was the obvious pressing need of moral and

[1] Isaiah 53 and 61.

spiritual reform and the still, small voice in his own heart bidding him throw himself into the need of the hour, let the issue be what it may. Then, too, there was the fact of John's imprisonment and the consequent need of some other prophetic soul to continue his mission and bring it to completion. No one there was but Jesus to meet that need. Would he allow fear, misgiving, doubt, to conquer him? Would he yield to the claims of safety, ease, security, self-gratification in the presence of dangers and seemingly insurmountable difficulties? Such, I take it, was the temptation of Jesus, the testing to which his soul was put. To be tempted is to be tested. The railroad bridge is thrice tempted to give way before a passenger train can cross it. The boiler in the engine is tempted to burst before it is relied upon to do its work. So the moral worth of a human being must be tested, tried, tempted to break down before Satanic suggestions and devices; only then can it be relied upon to be true to its calling.

Jesus, in the first flush of enthusiasm over a great opportunity and a mighty task, dedi-

cates himself to its fulfillment. Then comes the moment of reaction, of hesitation and misgiving, of seclusion and sober reflection. He is torn between the vision of limitless possibilities for service and the consciousness of divers obstacles in the path of its realization. He struggles with paralyzing doubt and self-distrust. He stands at the parting of the ways, one pointing to an Eden of ease and security, the other to a Gethsemane of ineffable anguish and the annihilation of his most cherished hope. Tempted, he was, by ignoble fear, by lurking moral weakness, by cowardly shrinking, by the self-same Satan that under various guises has confronted, and as vainly beguiled, the master-spirits of humanity, the consecrated truth-seekers and reformers of history. Theodore Parker met him when deciding on allegiance to freedom at any price, as against comfortable continuance in denominational slavery. Arthur Hallam met him in the field of scepticism and vanquished him there by bold and fearless allegiance to the spirit of truth. Hence his dearest friend could exultingly sing:

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them: Thus he came, at length
To find a stronger faith his own.

Lowell warned us against the arch-demon as tempting to irresolution, indecision, inaction.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side.
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offers each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

The three temptations of the Synoptic legend lend themselves quite readily to ethical interpretation. To "live by bread alone" was, for Jesus, to renounce the higher needs of humanity, to ignore its hunger for truth and purity. He who would engage in the work of saving humanity must have an eye to *ultimate* values however much engrossed in endeavors after material good.

To "worship" the "devil" who promises "power" and "glory" and "all the king-

doms of the world," to succumb to the blandishments of Mammon, this was, for Jesus, to ignore the invisible lure of that inner life of the spirit which alone guarantees true and imperishable wealth and without which no earthly riches can ever permanently satisfy.

Contemporary with Jesus there lived the emperor Tiberius, the undisputed, deified, acknowledged ruler of the civilized world, possessor of practically unlimited wealth, controller of all necessary resources for the gratifying of his desires. Yet his biographer, Pliny, called him "the gloomiest of men," because he had discovered that earth's richest gifts are but fairy gold and turn to dross if the sacred claims of the moral ideal are disowned. All that colossal magnificence in which he lived was no more able to sustain him in his place than is the sand-heap of the child to stay the sweep of the Atlantic tide. Were this world a perfect chrysolite, and that gem ours, it would not console us for the moment in our experience when we were weighed in the scales of character and found wanting.

To "tempt the Lord thy God," to fly in the face of providence, to spurn the fixed laws of the universe, was, for Jesus, no mode in which to manifest divine sonship. If it be granted that the temple "is symbolical of conservatism, of allegiance to the old dispensation, the law of Moses," as contrasted with concern for progress and devotion to a higher law, then this third temptation of Jesus might be construed as a testing of his loyalty to the deeper morality for which he stood and also of his trust in its power to prepare men for entrance into the coming kingdom of heaven on earth.

Such, I take it, were the real temptations to which Jesus was subjected. They were conquered by the counter-appeal of those moral principles which had been instilled into him as a child. His incisive "get thee behind me Satan" bears witness to his profound confidence in the power of an ethicized will. Reading the temptation narratives "with free reason and fluent fancy" we appreciate their innermost meaning and, instead of construing them as prosaic annals serviceable for dogmatic purposes, we see in

them beautiful poems pervaded with the reverence and love of those who sought to describe the experiences through which he passed in the attainment of complete self-mastery and perfect consecration to his calling.

So true is this story of the temptation to universal human nature that we find it paralleled in the biographies of other great religious teachers, notably in those of the Buddha and Zoroaster. In the Avesta, the Zoroastrian Bible, we read that Ahriman, the Satan of the religion, besought its founder to abjure his faith and thereby secure the great reward which it is in the power of the Evil One to bestow. In resisting his enticements Zoroaster quoted a passage of scripture held in highest esteem among his followers. In the Avestan book called the Vendidad, which corresponds to Leviticus in the Old Testament, the story of Zoroaster's temptation is recorded. Let me quote the cardinal sentences of the narrative: "From the regions of hell rushed forth Ahriman, the deadly, the evil One. But Zoroaster chanted, 'The will of the Lord

is the law of holiness, riches shall be given to him who works according to the will of Mazda the Lord.' The Demon dismayed rushed away saying: 'I see no way to defeat him, so great is the glory of the holy Zoroaster.' Again came the guileful One, the evil One, saying, 'O, holy Zoroaster, renounce the good religion of Mazda the Lord and thou shalt gain such reward as King Zohek gained.' Zoroaster said: 'Never will I renounce the good law of Mazda, though my body, my life and my senses should burst. With the holy Word shall I be victor, with that Word shall I expel thee.' "

In the Pitakas, the sacred scriptures of the Buddhists, we read that Gotama was thrice tempted before he attained Buddhahood. When resolved to go forth from his home in search of "the way of salvation," he was met by "Mara the Evil One," who besought him to renounce his purpose, promising him "sovereignty over the four continents and the two thousand adjacent isles." But "the Blessed One" said: "It is not sovereignty that I seek; I desire to become a Buddha and make the whole world

glad." Having dedicated himself to the search for saving truth, and believing in common with his contemporaries that fasting and physical austerities promote mental insight, Gotama gave himself over to ascetic practices. And when, at length, he had been brought close to death from sheer starvation, Mara came a second time, saying: "What good can come from this self-denial; deign to live and then wilt thou be able to do good works." Gotama replied: "Death in battle is better than to live defeated." Finally the long sought enlightment came. Seated under a lotus tree (since known as the "Bodhi" tree), the solution of the problem upon which he had been engaged for six years came to him. And Mara also came, hoping to defeat the Buddha in his hour of triumph. Mara's demons, we are told, "attacked the Blessed One," but "their arrows turned into fragrant flowers." Then the arch-demon dispatched his three daughters, Lust, Folly and Envy, to entice Gotama back to the worldly life by sensuous solicitations, by appeals to vain and shallow satisfactions. But the Buddha "remained unresponsive

and was victorious." Then Mara said: "I find no sin in him, and now is he indeed beyond my power."

Among the ancient Greeks a legend obtained concerning the temptation of Hercules. According to Xenophon, Hercules went forth into a solitary place perplexed as to which of two paths he should pursue. Two stately female figures waited upon him; the one, of modest demeanor and clad in white robes; the other, with complexion assisted by art, seemed fairer and more engaging. The former was *Virtue,* bidding him choose the path of self-denial and service; the latter was *Vice,* pointing the way to selfishness and sin and promising happiness.

In these parallels to the Gospel narrative—and they might easily be multiplied by reference to the sacred scriptures of other religions—we see under varying forms an epitome of the spiritual experience of universal Man. All these legends admit of application to our personal life. 'Tis only as we have a decisive "Get thee behind me Satan" in our moral vocabulary that we shall hear the confession, "now is he indeed beyond my

power," and taste both "the peace that passeth understanding" and the joy which is more than happiness.

Each of the temptations ascribed to Jesus by the writers of the first and third Gospels is the type of a universal experience. What man is there who has not at some time been confronted by that Satan, Selfishness, in one or another of its many forms, tempted to live by bread alone, unmindful of the claims of the starving spirit; or to risk his life presumptuously, blind to the fact that his life is not his own to do with as he will; or to fall down in worship before unspiritual gods, ignoring the only fealty which saves the soul?

To the rich, Satan appears in the form of haughtiness, false pride, vanity and vulgar display; to the well-to-do, in the shape of envy and apeing of the rich; to the poor, in the guise of an undivine discontent, born of ignorance of actual facts, and breeding sentiments anarchic and revolutionary.

To severe and lonely struggle with the power of sin must every human being be called, for on no easier terms can the natural man develop into the spiritual and that which

is essentially human in us be assured of its alliance to what is divine. So thought Pope Innocent XII, as Browning portrayed him in "The Ring and the Book." Hear his thrilling appeal:

> Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedestaled in triumph?
> . . . . . .
>
> Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
> Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight
> That so he may do battle and have praise!

Picture a world without temptation or trial, a world in which no struggle ever tries the conscience, no misfortune ever ruffles the breast, no conflict ever tests the soul. In such a world there could be innocence indeed, but not character; automata, but not free moral agents. Hence, the absurdity of Huxley's indictment of the universe on the ground that moral evil in the form of temptation and spiritual conflict is part of the total scheme of things. There are but two known ways in which temptation could have been prevented in the ordering of the cosmos and

neither of these would be desirable. Either we might have been constructed as automata, incapable of doing wrong; or we might be saved from temptation by miraculous intervention each time it crossed our path. Huxley, in his haste, declared he would willingly become a moral automaton were God to offer him the privilege. But would it be a privilege to be turned from tempted men into automatic machines? In a world where character is the supreme desideratum of personal life would it be a mark of Divine beneficence to save us from temptation? On the contrary, the prevention of moral pain in a world where soul-development is the mainspring of life would be an impeachment of the goodness of its Creator. Nor is it within the scope of Omnipotence to bestow upon us character as an outright gift, seeing that temptation and conflict are inseparably bound up with its attainment, and that character is actually *meaningless* except as a product of battle with temptation.

Thus we have no alternative, as thoughtful, character-loving souls, but to accept and welcome the part that spiritual conflict plays

in our life. Such was the Gospel preached by the foremost spiritual teacher of our time, the most virile and spiritually-awakening mind in English poetry, who in his philosophy of life, as expounded in "Rabbi Ben Ezra" incorporated the lines:

> Poor vaunt of life indeed,
> Were man but formed to feed
> On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
> Such feasting ended, then
> As sure an end to men;
> . . . . . .
> Then, welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!

Again and again in our experience will we find ourselves driven into the wilderness where all without is "silent as the Dead Sea shore," but all within turbulent with "the mid-strife 'twixt heaven and hell," leaving us "wasted as with fasting and nigh unto death." But if in that hour we are only true to the spirit which says "thou shalt not live by bread alone," if we "quietly descend from our pinnacle of pride" and bend no knee to "the majesty of tinselled wrong,"

but drive away every lure of guilt by allegiance to the holiest we know, then will the angels of self-respect and loyalty come unto us and minister unto us, and fill us with a joy and peace no power can ever take away.

IV

MIRACLES AND THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

Every thoughtful reader of the Synoptic Gospels must have observed that Jesus the healer is just as integral a part of the record as Jesus the teacher. Even the most critically sifted sections of the Gospels leave us the portraiture of the healing Jesus. No aspect of his ministry is so persistently present in the Synoptics as that of his curative influence and power. Nor do any other narratives evince their verity more conclusively than those in which his gift of healing appears. It is attested both by his popularity as a healer and by the variety of theories offered to explain his success.[1]

According to the earliest of the Gospels (and Mark is generally so considered, though there are sections of Matthew that may be

[1] See Encyclopædia Biblica: article "Gospels."

of earlier date), within eight hours of the beginning of his public ministry Jesus' fame as a healer had spread throughout all the region round about Galilee, so that at sunset he finds himself surrounded by a throng of sufferers pressing forward to be cured. The next day the crowd at a Capernaum home, where Jesus was visiting, is so great that when a victim of palsy is brought to be healed he can gain entrance only through the roof of the one-story house. Then follows in Mark's narrative the report of a succession of healings, Jesus curing those "diseased" or "possessed of devils." And when we turn to the other two Gospels the record does but confirm and emphasize his popularity as a healer, forcing us to feel that whatever our view of the results achieved, the reality of a healing ministry cannot be doubted. And when we review the theories broached to account for what was done, we see that they re-attest the healing ministry. We note first the theory of the immediate relatives of Jesus, who take the ground that he is out of his senses, that much benevolence has made him mad; "he is beside him-

self,"[1] they say. Next, there is the theory of the Pharisees who declare he is in league with Beelzebub.[2] Herod's theory is that John the Baptist had miraculously ascended from Sheol and was impersonated in this healer.[3] A multitude of beneficent deeds must have been done, else his relatives would not have imputed incipient insanity to Jesus. Healing facts there were, requiring adequate explanation, else the Pharisees would not have proffered their interpretation of them. Herod's theory is obviously absurd, but, as Schmiedel has pointed out, the very absurdity of it witnesses to extraordinary facts that forced their way into the palace of a King.[4]

Thus the healing ministry of Jesus is doubly attested and at the same time expressive of a sympathetic, tender concern for those physically and morally sick. Nor is there in the Gospels any healing act the genuineness of which need be questioned. No violation of known law is involved in

[1] Mark 3 : 21.
[2] Mark 3 : 22.
[3] Mark 6 : 14-16.
[4] Encyclopædia Biblica: article, "Gospels."

any of the reported cures.[1] All are familiar to medical science not less than to Christian Science, Dowieism, Emmanuelism and other kindred occultisms. To the student of physiological psychology these New Testament cures take their place by the side of those achieved at Lourdes and Ste. Anne de Beaupré, in the clinic of Charcot and in that of many a regular medical practitioner competent to treat successfully the various forms under which hysteria appears and without ever resorting to materia medica.

In the great laboratories of Europe and America it has been discovered that the range of nervous cause and implication in the ills to which we are susceptible is much wider than we were accustomed to suppose. It has been found that nothing is more paralyzing than a hysterical imagination and that the range of functional disturbance, whether in the digestive, circulatory or nervous systems, is practically unlimited. It has also been discovered that the seat of some of the most baffling diseases is in the imagination

[1] Mark 1 : 23, 27, 30, 32; 2 : 5, 12; 3 : 1, 5; 5 : 1-16; 7 : 26-29.

and the will and that to effect a cure these must be directly reached. Hence, the rise of the "neo-homeopathy," if so we may call it, the theory that "like cures like," that whatever has a nervous cause must be given a nervous cure. Not drugs, but a nervous shock or thrill must be administered. Or it may be that some incisive word, or look, or gesture suffices to restore the normal flow of the vital currents.

From the Talmud we learn of the widespread prevalence, during the first century of our era, of nervous diseases and of lunacy in all its degrees. The immediate cause was the excitement engendered by the expectation of the Messiah who, it was believed, would appear at any moment to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It was an age of signs and wonders, of soothsayings and divinations.[1] The fires of Messianic hope, after smouldering for several decades, were once more fanned into a flame. People were on tip-toe of expectation, a condition akin to that with which "Millerism" has made us familiar and attended by such disorders,

[1] II Cor. 12 : 11, 12.

physical and mental, as are described in the Synoptics. Dr. Goddard, a distinguished graduate of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, after two years of study devoted exclusively to this subject, drew up a classified list of modern diseases parallel to those of ancient Palestine and successfully treated in our own day by just such methods as Jesus employed.

What were his methods? In the main they were psychical. He speaks to the patient, takes him by the hand, or puts his own hand upon him, and, with decisive tone, commands the evil spirit to depart from the sufferer. For, like his Jewish contemporaries, Jesus believed that all such disorders as he dealt with were caused by evil spirits obsessing the patient, and that exorcism is therefore the only cure. The science of medicine in those days consisted in discovering the best method of exorcizing the demons. Not the best educated man, but the most devout, was found competent to heal. The more spiritual the personality of the healer, the more fit would he be to cast out evil spirits. If these are the cause of sickness, and exorcism is the

cure, the most spiritually minded man will be the best doctor.

Rarely did Jesus use material aids. Our earliest Gospel records but two instances. In the one spittle and clay were employed to cure a case of temporary blindness; in the other Jesus put his fingers into the ears of a man to cure him of deafness. At times Jesus relied on auto-suggestion to produce the desired result. The woman who complained she had "suffered many things from many physicians" in the course of twelve years and had spent all she possessed on fees and was rather worse than when her treatment began, declared that if she could only touch the hem of Jesus' garment she believed she would be healed; and, touching it, her ailment left her.[1] Jesus, turning to her, said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," the point being that it was not *his* power that healed, but her *auto-suggestion*.[2]

Jesus was not always successful in his healing. In his native town he could do no great work because his fellow citizens had

[1] Mark 5 : 25-34.
[2] Mark 6 : 5-6.

no faith in him.[1] And the same biographer who records this confession of his, adds the saying, "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kind."[2] One condition of success, according to Jesus, was the patient's possession of faith. "If thou canst believe," he is reported to have said; "all things are possible to him that believeth."[3]

When we ask for precise details of what Jesus accomplished in his healing ministry—just *what* the diseases cured were, the *number* cured and the *permanency* of the cure—we are confronted with insurmountable difficulties. Not only are the data upon which to arrive at accurate conclusions on these points lacking, but even when all three Gospels report the same incident we see that the story has grown with the telling—a characteristic of the records which we had occasion to note in our study of the temptation of Jesus. When we pass from the earlier to the later documents we observe an increase in the element of the marvellous, due

[1] Mark 6 : 5-6. [2] Mark 6 : 4.
[3] Mark 6 : 5; 9 : 23.

to an idealizing impulse which enhances the first legendary details with a fresh increment of the marvellous each time the original unembellished fact is retold. Compare, for instance, the three records of each of the following incidents in the healing ministry of Jesus:

Mark 3 : 10. The people press about Jesus to be healed (but no cure is mentioned).

Matthew 9 : 20. The miraculous has been effected. A woman in the crowd is healed by touching the hem of his garment.

Luke 6 : 19. *All* who touched him were healed. Thus from a simple nucleus of fact a miracle gradually takes shape, illustrating an increasing expansion of the original statement in response to the legendary impulse.

Again we read: Mark 1 : 32, 34. *All* the sick were brought to Jesus and he healed *some.*

Matt. 8 : 15. *Many* were brought to him and he healed *all.*

Luke 4 : 40. *All* were brought to him and he healed *all.*

Once more we read:

Mark 7 : 32, 37. One man, deaf and with an impediment in his speech, is healed.

Matt. 15 : 30. A whole multitude of lame, blind, and dumb are healed.

At Gerasa, according to the earliest Gospel, one demoniac was relieved of an evil spirit. According to Matthew, two were cured. So, again, in the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter, the records read: "She is not dead, but sleeping," "she is a-dying," "she is even now dead." Hence, the impossibility of determining precisely what occurred while admitting that the varying narratives have a root in one or another healing act of Jesus. Seeing him perform some wonderful deed, restoring to normal well-being persons suffering from nervous disorder, it is easy to understand how Jesus' contemporaries would ascribe to him every species of miraculous power without pausing either to distinguish between diseases susceptible of healing by psychical methods and those not amenable to such treatment, or to question the permanency of the cures effected.

Just how far thought can influence bodily states is one of the burning therapeutic ques-

tions of the day, but the notion that thought, or suggestion, is a "panacea," equal to curing all manner of disease, is an assumption for which there is no warrant in the reported ministry of Jesus.

We come now to the consideration of miracles as distinguished from works of healing. For, while the word miracle, as a synonym for wonderful, applies to the recorded cures, there is also its more specific use to describe not merely that which excites admiration or astonishment, but that which has no analogy in life as we know it—a departure from the established order of things, an alleged act not attributable to any of the known causal operations of Nature and hence doing violence to the known laws of the physical world.

Of miracles in this restricted sense of the word the Synoptics record several distinct types. What construction are we to put upon these? Are they to be accepted as actual but inexplicable occurrences, or as spontaneous inventions originating in the wake of the wonderful healings Jesus achieved, or, again, as merely garbled reports of discourses in which Jesus used this

material to point some moral lesson or spiritual truth? For this third point of view there seems to be considerable warrant. The Gospels have preserved an interesting example of precisely such a garbling process in the reports of Matthew and Mark that Jesus had cursed a fig tree. Comparing their accounts with what we read in Luke's *parable of a fruitless fig tree* and remembering that Luke was, according to his own statement,[1] a sifter of literary material, we conclude that Jesus at one time spoke a parable to teach Israel her unworthiness to inherit the Kingdom. She made a display of piety, but bore no fruit of righteousness. Therefore must she perish like the fig tree, which made a fine outward showing of leaves, but bore no fruit, fit only to be cut down and cast into the fire.

In the three reportings of the original only one writer (Luke) retained the teacher's purpose; the other two transmitted merely the illustrative details, a fig tree in full leaf, a withering, a doom; thus reducing the original ethical parable to a mere anecdote and thereby exposing Jesus to the charge of "un-

[1] Luke 1 : 1-4.

reasonable violence against an innocent and unconscious tree."[1]

If, then, Jesus has been misreported here, may it not be that in the case of some of the miracles a similar process of misrepresentation obtained? In other words, shall we not approximate the truth as to their original form and purpose if we see in them the remains of parables or allegories? To illustrate, take one of the several accounts of the feeding of five thousand with a few loaves and two small fishes.[2] Here it seems quite clear that this feeding was not an historical occurrence, but a parable intended to show how a religious teacher with a small quantum of spiritual food feeds thousands of hungry souls, the immaterial food increasing with its consumption so that there remains over, as it were, much more than was imparted, kindling fresh thought and impulse in the recipients and creating in them power to satisfy the spiritual hunger of other souls. Or have we here the spontane-

[1] Compare Luke 13 : 6-9 with Matt. 21 : 19 and Mark 11 : 12.

[2] Matt. 14 : 15-21; 15 : 32-38; Mark 6 : 35-44; 8 : 1-9; Luke 9 ; 12-17.

ous product of one who felt persuaded that Jesus performed miracles far exceeding those of Old Testament prophets? Does the writer here illustrate the natural tendency to parallel and improve upon stories told of the two chief predecessors of Jesus, Moses and Elijah, representing respectively the Law and the Prophets? If Moses fed Israel for a year in the wilderness[1] and Elijah multiplied the widow's cruse of oil[2] and his successor made twenty loaves suffice for a hundred prophets, "so that they did eat and leave thereof," how much more would Jesus do!

Or, again, may not the narrative be a *blend* of Old Testament counterparts and the "materialization" of Jesus' function as dispenser of the "bread of life"? Certainly if we take the miracle literally we are at once involved in most perplexing difficulties, because it represents the Teacher as possessing a control over material objects and physical forces that stands in no necessary relation to the human portraiture presented

[1] Exod. 26.
[2] II Kings 4 : 42.

by the Synoptics. Hence the reader feels bound to find a way of escape from these difficulties. But all attempts (and many have been made) to treat the incident as an actual occurrence and put upon it a plausible construction have failed. For either the meaning of this text has been emasculated, or it has been perverted, as when it is suggested that many of the five thousand had brought provisions with them, especially they who were on their way to the Passover feast at Jerusalem! Far more rational it is and wholly in keeping with the mental habits and thought-tendencies of that time to see in this story "the confusion of a symbol with a fact," describing as an actual occurrence what was originally an illustration of an idea. And for such a view of the miracle there is all the more warrant when we read the account of a miraculous draught of fishes related in the fifth chapter of Luke's Gospel. For this story shows abundant evidence of a symbolical intent behind it. Jesus, having entered a boat, pushes it off a bit and then turns to teach the crowd gathered on the shore of the lake. At the close of his

address he bids Peter "push out into the deep and lower his nets." Despite his ill-luck of the preceding night, the nets now rapidly fill with fish, even to the breaking point. Overcome with wonder, Peter falls at Jesus' feet, whereupon Jesus says to him, "Henceforth thou shalt catch men." When Peter and his partners, James and John, come ashore they "leave all and follow Jesus." All three are to be henceforth "fishers of men," far out in the deep. Surely the significance of the narrative is not far to seek.

Had not Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a net that was lowered into the sea and gathered of every kind?[1] Is not the sea the world, in which are men of every race? Did not the apostle Paul deplore and endeavor to heal the breach in the infant Church of which Peter, James and John were the anti-Gentile representatives, opposing his broad inclusive terms of fellowship?[2] Must we not, therefore, see, in Peter's unwillingness to let down the net, an illustra-

[1] Matt. 13 : 47.
[2] Gal. 2 : 9.

tion of the reluctance of the narrow Jewish party to admit Gentiles into the church? And when, in the appendix to the Fourth Gospel,[1] we read a similar story, with the important differentiating feature of the *unbroken* nets, does it not plainly symbolize that restoration of harmony and unity in the Church which crowned the labors of the apostle to the Gentiles?

A similar interpretation of miracle-stories in terms of allegory, or of parable, is irresistibly suggested in those relating to the stilling of a storm, or to walking upon the water. 'Tis easy to conjecture the sort of expressions Jesus would have used in preaching his gospel of poise and trust. Easy, also, it is to see how these eventually materialized in Gospel-stories. Toward their formation many a passage from the Psalms or Job or Isaiah would contribute cardinal phrases and figures of speech; e. g., "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still," "treadeth upon the waves of the sea," "maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters."[2]

[1] John 21 : 11. [2] Ps. 107 : 29; Job 9 : 8; Isa. 43 : 16.

Even the most stupendous of all the miracles ascribed to Jesus, the raising of Lazarus, recorded only in the Fourth Gospel, proves on examination, to take its place in the same category with the foregoing. Professor Bacon of Yale, in his recent work on this Gospel, calls it "the preëminently unreal of the unreal narratives of the Fourth Gospel."[1] Elsewhere in the same book he says: "It is simply inconceivable that a miracle of such magnitude, performed on the eve of the last momentous week of Jesus' life, in the presence of crowds, in a suburb of Jerusalem, a miracle which according to the Fourth Gospel was the immediate cause of the crucifixion, should have been passed over by all three of the Synoptists. On this ground alone we are compelled to conclude that the story is symbolical." Nor are its component elements far to seek. Woven, the story is, out of scattered hints furnished by (1) the narrative in the tenth chapter of Luke, of Jesus at supper in the home of Lazarus, with his sisters Martha and Mary, (2) the parable of Dives and Lazarus, in

[1] B. W. Bacon: "The Fourth Gospel," p. 345.

the sixteenth chapter of the same Gospel, closing with the significant words, "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Further contributions were supplied by the stories of the raising of Jairus' daughter and the son of the widow of Nain, stories which, we have already seen, bear witness to the gradual heightening of the marvellous in the process of transmission. First we have a girl who has just expired (though, according to earlier accounts, she was "a-dying" or "only sleeping"), and then a young man on the point of being buried. It was but a step from this to the report of a body, four days dead and already decomposing, restored to life.

From what has been thus far said the following conclusions may be legitimately drawn: First, Jesus did exercise a wonderful healing influence over people physically, mentally and morally sick. And this influence is precisely what we should expect, given a passion for beneficent helpfulness in a great moral and spiritual personality. Second, the documents recording Jesus' deeds do not enable us to decide precisely what

was done by him in every case. At times the record is imperfect; occasionally the original fact has been enlarged upon in response to the legendary impulse.

Third, whereas in the group of healing narratives nothing is stated that need be doubted, in the group of recorded miracles, "all must be doubted as actual occurrences," to quote Professor Ropes of Harvard University. Yet all may be warrantably accounted for in terms of parable, or allegory, or appeal to Old Testament precedents.

Certain commentators in their effort to establish the credibility of the miracles as actual occurrences, point to "the narrow limits of human knowledge," and to the possibility of discoveries that will "fill the gaps of our ignorance" and furnish "adequate causes for inexplicable events." Far be it from us to dogmatize upon what lies beyond the narrow limits of our knowledge in an illimitable cosmos. "To the minnow," said Carlyle, "every nook and corner of its little creek is familiar, but does it know the tides, monsoons, eclipses by which its little creek is regulated? Such a minnow is

man; his ocean the infinite universe; his tides, monsoons and eclipses, the mysterious courses of Providence through ages and ages." It behooves us, therefore, to be circumspect and cautious in the attitude we take toward miracles. Yet equally essential it is that in accordance with Carlyle's doctrine, we affirm conformity to natural law as a *sine qua non* for acceptance of any miracle as an actual occurrence.

A fourth conclusion to which our study of the records leads us is that the evidence they furnish for the reality of the miracles is as inadequate and unsatisfying as that adduced in the "Pitakas" and the "Avesta" for belief in the miraculous deeds ascribed to the Buddha and to Zoroaster. No modern court of justice would for a moment entertain the evidence as valid. Note, to begin with, that the Gospel narratives are not the reports of eye-witnesses, but represent the testimony of men removed by two to four generations from the events described. These records were transmitted orally for ten or twenty years before they were committed to writing. One of the earliest attempts at transferring

the oral tradition to written form was made by Matthew, the disciple of Jesus. His compilation of sayings of Jesus formed the nucleus around which additional material slowly gathered in the course of half a century until a complete gospel appeared, naturally called "Matthew," because its nucleus had been supplied by the disciple of that name. Another early attempt at committing oral tradition to writing was made by one Mark, a disciple of Peter. He "wrote down all he could remember of what Peter had told him concerning Jesus," having taken special care "to forget nothing and to change nothing." These interesting and illuminating details have been furnished us by Papias, who was bishop of Hieropolis about the year 120 A. D., and whose "Exposition of the Teachings of Jesus" has been in part preserved for us by Eusebius, the first historian of the Christian Church, and a contemporary of Constantine. Thus it is clear that we do not know who were the writers of the Gospels, as we have them. Of the sources upon which they drew we have no knowledge. The author of the third Gospel tells us in his

preface that he had several manuscripts from which to prepare a new and better life of Jesus than any thus far published; but what these were we do not know. Nor again do we know just exactly what transpired in the case of every incident reported. For the accounts, as we have seen, differ in details. Summarized in a single sentence, the evidence in support of the miracles is tantamount to this: Somebody (we know not who the reporter was) said that somebody else (we know not who the spectator was) saw something strange (the precise details are indeterminable) somewhere (the records do not always agree on the place) at some other time and prior to the year 30 A. D. (the latest assignable date for the death of Jesus).

But let it be carefully noted that this insufficiency of the evidence does not impeach the writers. Their sincerity of purpose, their honesty and intellectual integrity stand unquestioned. No opinion or belief needs to be true in order to be believed. In all ages and lands there have been men who died for their beliefs. And what follows from this

fact is not that the beliefs were true, but that they were *believed* to be true. We have no reason whatever to doubt that the Evangelists believed in the occurrence of the incidents they reported. We are justified in questioning only their competency, not their honesty, and the more startling the story they tell, the greater the amount of evidence required for us to believe it. We hold, with Hume, that it is much more likely that men should be mistaken in what they hear or see than that a miracle should have occurred. And precisely as we do not say Suetonius lied when he said there was an earthquake the moment Caesar died, so in the case of the Gospel-writers we say they reported what they believed happened, but for which the evidence is altogether insufficient. Even representative orthodox scholars who feel constrained to accept the miracles as actual occurrences, yet insist that only as they involve no violation of known laws and are backed by adequate evidence can acceptance of them be legitimately required. Time was when such scholars used the New Testament miracles as evidences of the supernatural

character and origin of Christianity. To-day miracles no longer play this leading rôle, or even a subordinate part, in the presentation of "Christian evidences." Instead of miracles testifying to the divinity that was in Jesus, the relation has been reversed, *i. e.*, the spiritual greatness of Jesus testifies to the rise and growth of miracle-stories as the spontaneous product of contemporary reverence and love, stories shaped in accordance with current conceptions of God and Nature. So radically different were these from our modern ideas of the world and its government that when reading the accounts of healings and miracles we must bear in mind the theology and cosmology which obtained in Palestine in Jesus' day. God was conceived as a "great, non-natural, magnified man," located on a throne behind the blue sky, superintending the ongoing of his world—a three-story structure, governed in an altogether arbitrary fashion by his changeable will. There obtained, also, in that distant day and place the belief that evil spirits, agents of the Almighty, were empowered by Him to exercise a malign influence, to inflict

physical disease or nervous disorder on people. Moreover, it was believed that the power to tempt persons to do evil also lay within the mysterious power of these supernatural personalities. In the absence of our modern conception of law, any reported event, however strange or marvellous, took its place among things probable and possible; and whatsoever was inexplicable thereby gave evidence of a supernatural cause. Upon such an order of ideas do the Gospel narratives of healings and miracles rest. The world was in its childhood, hence its beliefs and interpretations were of the child-like kind. For the race in its evolution does but reproduce development-processes observable in the individual. In the average normal child one sees imagination more active than reason, feeling more fully developed than judgment, fancy and credulity more dominant than logical reasoning, innocent acceptance of statements and with no demand for proofs. Ordinary children find no difficulty in conceiving of birds and animals talking as in Aesop's fables, nor is their imagination checked in endowing with life and personal-

ity, the objects of their play, their dolls and tin soldiers, the tables and the chairs. Exactly so was it in the period we call the childhood of the race. Then reason and judgment were still undeveloped and the imagination was at work endowing natural forces and phenomena with spirits, good and evil. For as yet nothing was known of cause and effect, of natural law, in the operations of Nature. The conception of disease and death as natural occurrences, resulting from natural causes in the orderly ongoing of the universe, had no place in the thought of the childhood of the race. The question of the probable and the improbable, of the possible and the impossible, was wholly alien to the thinking of that time.

And just as in children, imagination and fancy are stronger than judgment, so innocent, unquestioning faith is stronger than rational doubt. The simple affirmation of father or mother suffices, doubt comes later with observation and experience. The child believes that Santa Claus comes down the chimney, never questioning whether the chimney is wide enough for him and his

pack. The child (and many an adult, too) believes the story of the star standing still directly over the stable at Bethlehem, never questioning the possibility of a star designating, at a distance of thousands of miles, a particular building. So here, again, in the childhood of the race we find the same absence of questioning, the same credulity, the same simple acceptance of wonders without asking for proof. The Roman historians, Tacitus, Livy, Suetonius, of the second century of our era, relate that whenever a Cæsar or a consul died, a flaming sword was brandished in the sky, or a meteor shot through the air, or an ox spoke. But not one of these historians questions the occurrence of what he relates. Bishop Lightfoot tells us that the Jews at the time of Jesus were given over to every species of credulity, ready to believe any and every strange story reported to them, and resorting themselves to amulets, charms and incantations. The early Christian Fathers, Cyprian, Tertullian, Origen, Clement, believed the stars were gods, and they accepted "Pagan" miracles as readily as those of Christian origin. So was

it in the childhood of the race. Its manhood dawned in the wonderful thirteenth century when freedom was reborn after the ecclesiastical bondage of a thousand years, when the free, critical, investigating spirit of the Greeks was once more manifest. And when the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton were made known and men began to realize the revolutionizing effect of what had been discovered upon the popular "Ptolemaic" theology, all incidents reported in the Gospels which appeared to contradict the discovered facts of the reign of law and the orderly processes of Nature, were promptly subjected to reëxamination,—and the end is not yet.

Four distinct attitudes have been taken toward the subject we are considering. First, that of the dogmatist. He stoutly insists on supernaturalism and consequently on the actual occurrence of all reported miracles. He holds that Jesus being "divine" was equal to the performing of any and every miracle. But it should be clear that there is no *necessary* relation between transcendent spiritual character and ability to do physical

wonders. Moreover, the Synoptic Gospels do not support a doctrine of the "divinity" of Jesus. That was reserved for the Fourth Gospel.

Over against the dogmatist stands the crude, raw rationalist repudiating the reported miracles as "pure fictions," and contending that Jesus was "merely a healer." As though the miracles are to be set down as valueless even if construed as fictions. As though we ever should have heard of Jesus had he been *only* a healer! No great religious movement would ever have originated with him had he been "merely a healer." At most, that would have made him the sensation of a decade, never a Master of the ages.

A third attitude is that of the iconoclast who ruthlessly sweeps away the whole brood of wonder-stories, labeling them legends and declaring them to be "utterly worthless." But I take it that transcendent worth attaches to these stories, even regarded as legends, because they testify, like the legends of Jesus' birth and childhood, and temptation, to his exceptional greatness. As a brilliant halo in the sky proves the existence of the

brighter sun beyond it, so every recorded legend is evidence of a great moral and spiritual light behind it. Hence, the deeper significance of those narratives supposed to be worthless because unhistorical. They testify to a vast spiritual nobility in Jesus, for, as has already been said, no legends, such as those related of him, would ever have taken shape had Jesus been an average or commonplace person.

It remains to touch upon a fourth attitude taken toward our subject. Its characteristic is discrimination. It distinguishes between *works of healing,* the genuineness of which there is no valid reason for doubting, and *miracles,* which must be doubted as actual occurrences, both because they contradict known laws and because the evidence in support of them is inadequate. Yet in its discriminating estimate of the latter, this attitude is constructive and sees in the miracles literary remains of parables or allegories, or counterparts of prophetic types. A further mark of this attitude is its appreciation of the fact that priceless worth attaches to these stories, even if they be "outright inven-

tions," because of the light they shed, even as such, upon the personality of Jesus, testifying to his essential greatness and goodness.

In his capacity as a moral and religious teacher he made use of metaphors and similes as means for clarifying his message. Often did he speak allegorically or in parables and often was he misunderstood, despite his express effort to be clear. Thus in the process of oral transmission many an illustrated lesson lost its particular intended point, and when finally committed to writing appeared as a miracle, or as an anecdote, with no ethical implication whatever. Such, at least, as we have seen, is the natural history of most of the miracles reported by the Synoptists.

Finally, it must be observed that, as one singularly endowed with the gift of healing, Jesus used his power with utter consecration. His aim was not to gain notoriety, not to gratify curiosity, not to gain authority for his message, not to win converts to his beliefs, but solely to promote the physical, moral and spiritual good of all who sought his help.

V

PREREQUISITES FOR KNOWING WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

The public life of Jesus was a ministry of healing and of teaching. And if the former be the more fully attested, the latter may lay claim to priority of attestation since sayings (*logia*) of Jesus were committed to writing before any record was made of his deeds.[1]

All three of the Synoptics present Jesus as a teacher. There is a "triple tradition" to this effect, albeit Mark's Gospel contains but a few scattered precepts as compared with the other two Evangelists', predominantly devoted, as they are, to an exposition of what Jesus taught.

Why should it be considered difficult to decide what Jesus' teachings were? Why must we be on our guard against mistaken conceptions of his message and take note of *pre-*

[1] According to Papias, op. cit.

requisites for a proper understanding and appreciation of what he taught? The answer is to be found partly in the character of the *records* and partly in certain practices and tendencies all too common among "liberal" *readers.* If instead of four Gospels we had only one, and that one written by Jesus himself, our difficulty would be reduced to the same minimum that obtains in the case of the Koran, of which there is but one text and of which Mohammed was the sole author. Let me cite two examples of the kind of difficulty we encounter in our endeavor to decide what Jesus taught.

We habitually speak of the Sermon on the Mount as though there were only one version of it. Whereas two editions have come down to us, the longer one in Matthew's gospel and the shorter in Luke's. In the latter, Jesus is reported as saying, "Blessed be ye poor"; in the former, his blessing is upon "the poor in spirit."[1] Moreover, in Matthew's version we note an entire absence of the maledictions found in Luke's, while among the assured results of the higher criticism is the conclusion

[1] Luke 6 : 20; Matt. 5 : 3.

that the sermon was not spoken at a single sitting, nor is it the product of a single mind. A composite it is, made up for the most part of sayings, uttered by Jesus on various occasions, together with certain passages incorporated at the time when the infant church was persecuted and threatened with annihilation.[1]

Again, we are accustomed to speak of the Lord's Prayer as though there were no question as to its actual content and origin. Does the Lord's Prayer consist of the fifty-three verses in the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, or of the thirty-seven verses transmitted by the Gospel of Luke? Did Jesus, when he taught his disciples to pray, include the three passages which Luke omits in his version, or did Matthew introduce three sentences that formed no part of the original prayer?[2]

These examples will serve to illustrate the fact that it is not always easy to decide just what Jesus taught, and that an essential prerequisite is some measure of acquaintance

[1] Matt. 6 : 10, 11; 7 : 15.
[2] Compare Matt. 6 : 9-13 with Luke 11 : 2-4.

with the assured results of the higher criticism in this field. Recall the radical, far-reaching differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. These have given rise to a further prerequisite, namely, appeal to the *latter* only, for the Fourth Gospel is in no sense an historical account either of the sayings or of the deeds of Jesus. Even such ultra-conservative scholars as Sanday and Worsley admit the difficulty of believing that Jesus ever uttered the speeches recorded in this Gospel, so altogether unlike those reported by the Synoptists, which everywhere betoken historic reality. It may be that the ethical teachings contained in the Fourth Gospel have an ultimate foundation in actual utterances of Jesus—a theory supported by Harnack and Schweizer with much skill—but in their present form and language they are beyond all possibility of identification. This is particularly true of passages that in spirit resemble the Synoptic types, for example, the conversations with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria and the woman taken in adultery.[1] In short, the Fourth Gospel ex-

[1] John 8 : 3-11; 4 : 5, 24; 13.

hibits a very much later and wholly different order of thought from that of the Synoptics, so that if we choose it as our book of reference for Jesus' teachings we can not make equal and consistent use of the Synoptics. The trend of criticism has been increasingly toward this conclusion. Professor Bacon, of Yale University, the latest writer of distinction on the Fourth Gospel, leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to the prior claim of the Synoptics when deciding what Jesus taught. And he bases his conviction upon the fundamental differences in origin, date, content and purpose between these two sources of information. Suffice it now to touch only upon some of the more striking points of contrast.

The Synoptics present the teaching of Jesus as simple, plain, irresistible; devoid of theological terms, and spoken in a style singularly direct and persuasive. The Fourth Gospel does not present an irresistible teacher at all, but rather an awe-inspiring expositor, whose expositions are of himself, his dignity, his glory, his descent, his origin and eternality—topics metaphysical, mystical, theological; and all alike clothed in a

style at once diffuse, involved and hieratic. The Synoptics show us Jesus as a man of intense sympathy and infinite tenderness, tempted, suffering, confessing weakness and want of knowledge and subject, at times, to certain moods of great depression and misgiving; a wondrous human personality, making a most powerful human appeal. The Fourth Gospel introduces us to Jesus as the incarnate Word, an emanation from Deity and, as such, incapable of weakness, temptation and suffering, either in the garden or on the cross, and knowing all things from the beginning.

The Synoptics focus attention upon the Kingdom of God, the Fourth Gospel mentions it but twice, and then quite incidentally, concerned rather with "The Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father." The Synoptics teach that salvation is conditioned only upon man's doing "the will of the Father which is in Heaven"; the Fourth Gospel makes "belief" the test of salvation. As the theme of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel is *Jesus himself,* so in the Synoptics it is the *cause* to which he dedicated his life.

Such are some of the more important differences between the two sources of information. And while it is quite possible to construct an ethics of Jesus out of the Fourth Gospel alone, yet if we do so, accepting this record as historically correct, we have no alternative but to surrender the Synoptics.

Let it not be forgotten that the Fourth Gospel distinctly declares its purpose to have been the presentation not of an accurate, orderly biography of Jesus, but rather a theologico-philosophical interpretation of his person.[1]

And the immediate value of the Gospel lies here: Permanent and universal as are the great spiritual truths enunciated by the "Incarnate Word," they bespeak the influence of Alexandrian and other Greek thought to which the Synoptic biographers were strangers.

In other words, a fundamental prerequisite for deciding what Jesus taught is scrupulous regard for the source from which sayings attributed to him are derived. And the more the higher criticism reveals concerning the

[1] John 20 : 31; 1 : 12, 18.

"Johannine" literature, the more imperative fidelity to this prerequisite becomes. We must refrain from that indiscriminate use of the Four Gospels which characterizes many a modern book on the ethics of Jesus. Here, for example, are two widely circulated monographs on "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," written by Professor Peabody of Harvard University and Professor Matthews of Chicago. These authors seek to show just what Jesus taught concerning wealth, poverty, the industrial order, marriage, divorce. Yet, without a single word as to their sources of information, both writers quote freely from all four Gospels, taking all texts at their face value as equally authoritative to support the views presented. One has only to take a glance at the footnotes in each chapter to confirm the truth of this criticism. Not only is there this indiscriminate use of all four Gospels, calling in the Fourth to strengthen quotations from the Synoptics, but even the opposite procedure occasionally obtains. Thus, in dealing with the relation of Jesus to the problem of social service, Professor Peabody makes his initial appeal

to the Fourth Gospel and then sustains its position on the subject by drawing on the other three Gospels.[1] Obviously the effect of this indiscriminate use of the four Gospels must be to introduce an element of uncertainty and confusion into every conclusion the authors reach, leaving us with views on the social question which are supposed to represent Jesus, but which in many instances illustrate only the genius of the authors in shaping social doctrines out of Gospel material.

But if we are to approximate knowledge of what Jesus taught on the social question, the prerequisite of resorting solely to the Synoptics for our proof-texts must be fulfilled. And this leads us directly to a third important prerequisite.

Even in our use of the Synoptics caution and care must be exercised. For while they have so much in common as to justify their grouping under this convenient title they yet reveal points of difference no less noteworthy than the resemblances. Of this we have al-

[1] F. G. Peabody: "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," pp. 76 *et seq.*

ready had hints in preceding studies showing how differently the same story has been reported by all three evangelists. Hence one is forced to ask in which one of these varying forms did Jesus express himself? Which of the three represents the original utterance and how shall the changes in the other two versions be explained? Or, perchance, is the original only approximated, the text as it appears showing signs of addition or omission? What of the passages in Luke that have no parallel in either of the other two Gospels? One has only to ask such questions as these to realize at once that it is by no means invariably certain what Jesus taught and that among the prerequisites for deciding the matter particular weight must be attached to careful and comparative estimates of the Synoptic material.

Once more we must take cognizance of manuscripts and papyri fragments discovered since 1885, the year in which the "revised" version of the New Testament was published. For these discoveries have modified long-established views on important points connected with the life and teaching of Jesus.

Conspicuous among these recent supplementary sources of information is the Oxyrhyncus (Behuera, in Egypt) papyrus fragment written in Greek, discovered in 1897, and antedating the earliest extant Greek manuscripts by one hundred years. This papyrus contains eight "sayings" of Jesus, four of which are missing in our Gospels, while three of the remaining four give us familiar sayings of Jesus in form perhaps older than those that appear in our Gospels. The eighth saying has been almost entirely obliterated. Without pausing to comment on these sentences let it suffice if they be now merely reproduced:

1. . . . and thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

2. Jesus saith, except ye fast to the world ye shall in nowise find the Kingdom of God, and except ye keep the Sabbath ye shall not see the Father.

3. Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth

over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart.

4. . . . poverty . . .

5. Jesus saith, wherever there are . . . and there is one alone I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

6. Jesus saith, a prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him.

7. Jesus saith, a city built upon the top of a hill and established can neither fall nor be hid.

8. . . . hearest . . . one ear . . .

No less noteworthy is the Syriac version of the four Gospels, discovered in 1892 on Mount Sinai by Mrs. Agnes Lewis and to which reference was made in an earlier lecture. This is a palimpsest manuscript and bears witness to a rendering of the Gospels made about 250 A. D., or a century prior to the production of the Sinaitic manuscript, which, with the Vatican manuscript, is the oldest extant Greek version of the New Testament. Contemporary scholarship has

found this palimpsest of *first-class* importance as a witness to Jesus' life and teaching.

Another important prerequisite for knowing what Jesus taught is acquaintance with the then current conceptions of the world, seen and unseen.

Precisely as one must know Elizabethan England to understand Shakspere, so one must needs have acquaintance with Herodian Palestine to understand Jesus. Not, indeed, that such knowledge fully explains him. For, while he was by no means independent of heredity and environment, account must also be taken of the genius of Jesus, his power to transcend these agencies. Witness, for example, his perception and revelation of the infinite significance attaching to each human life, even the humblest and lowest; his grasp on that *morality of the spirit* which marked an advance upon the Law and the Prophets.

How radically different was the thought-world in which Jesus moved from that familiar to us. The ideas of law, evolution, monism, that characterize our modern theory of

the universe, these had no place in the world-view of Jesus. He thought of the world as a three-story structure patterned after the tabernacle,[1] fiat-made, static and dualistic to the extent that Satan, though subordinate to Yahweh, yet participated in the government of human affairs. By reason of this radical difference in the two cosmologies, the one fundamentally "Ptolemaic," the other "Copernican," there exists a corresponding difference in the theologies developed out of them; for every theology is rooted in a cosmology. Consequently in endeavoring to understand the teachings of Jesus due importance must be attached to the prerequisite relating to his *weltanschauung.*

To appreciate the importance of the prerequisite, recall the use Jesus makes of the terms Heaven, Hell, Kingdom of God, Paradise, everlasting punishment, Satan, end of the world. Here is a group of theological terms, to each of which very definite meaning was attached in the first century in Palestine. We must, therefore, be on our guard lest we put a *modern* construction upon them

[1] Exod. 26.

and so misinterpret the eschatology of Jesus with which his ethical teaching was often bound up. Take, for instance, the term Heaven. This, according to the Jewish belief inherited by Jesus, was applied to a particular extra-mundane place, situated above the firmament, the abode only of God and his angels, Enoch and Elijah. Not till after his resurrection, the records tell us, did Jesus enter Heaven. Thither he went from Paradise, that section of Sheol to which all good people departed at death. Hence the remark of Jesus to the repentent thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The other section of Sheol was Hell, a place of torment reserved for the wicked, as we learn from the story of Dives and Lazarus in Luke's Gospel. The term Kingdom of God signified not only an inner spiritual condition, but also an external order of society, to be miraculously established on earth in the generation to which Jesus belonged and in which only they who possessed purity of heart and a consecrated will could dwell. Sayings there are which show that Jesus shared the popular political or regal

conception of the coming Kingdom,[1] although his immediate interest was obviously in its ethical and spiritual aspect. Not once did he set himself in opposition to the popular expectation, or discourage belief in it. Of many of his parables is it the motif,[2] and bound up with it are his terrorizing thoughts on future punishment as exemplified by the familiar passages in the thirteenth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew's Gospel. Even if these imply eternal *spiritual* suffering, the duration thereof is to tally with the blessed future life of the righteous. To say that these passages are not authentic, that the grim endings we find in certain parables are "the work of a later hand," is to affirm that for which there is no valid warrant. Nowhere does Jesus controvert the current doctrines of the hereafter. Not even the Sermon on the Mount is free from the forbidding features of the local eschatology.[3]

We cannot arbitrarily preserve the first half of a verse that is purely ethical in con-

[1] Toy: "Judaism and Christianity," p. 342.
[2] Matt. 13 : 24, 30, 38, 42, 47, 50; 8 : 6; Luke 16 : 25.
[3] Matt. 5 : 22, 29, 30; 7 : 13, 14, 22.

tent and reject the last half which is eschatological and overshoots the ethical mark. To be sure, the eschatology of the Gospels cannot be made "the master-key of their meaning," yet no impartial study of the Synoptics can evade the fact that many an ethical teaching of Jesus has an eschatological color and character that can no more be dissociated from the ethical element than the color from the form of an orange. The two are distinct but inseparable.

It were, indeed, a sorry misunderstanding of the record to see in Jesus "merely a Hebrew enthusiast announcing a Utopian dream," yet the truth remains that there are maxims even in the Sermon on the Mount "based on an *interim* ethics adapted to a transitory world."[1] Undoubtedly Matthew Arnold expressed a wise canon of criticism when he said, "Jesus above the heads of his reporters," but from this we are not to infer that "the vein of eschatological allusion" which runs through the Gospels betrays in-

[1] This paragraph was inserted as the book passed through the press, the quoted passages referring to an article by Prof. Peabody in the *Harvard Theological Review*, April, 1913, p. 136.

variably "the preconceptions of the evangelists." Again and again must we believe that "it reveals the Teacher's mind,"[1] that he frankly urged men to arrange their lives with reference to the approaching end of the world. In other words, while it is true that in his teachings Jesus transcended the thought of his age, many of his ethical utterances indicate he was also the child of his age and that he felt no incompatibility in presenting his message now with and now without eschatological relation.

I, for one, then, cannot endorse the position of President King of Oberlin College in his recent work on "The Ethics of Jesus." He declares that all considerations of the eschatological ideas of Jesus must be shut out when considering his ethical teaching. But what an immense difference it makes in our estimate of Jesus' teaching whether or not he urged men to strive for righteous living because their reward would be great and to refrain from evil lest they be cast into the fire that is never extinguished! How can we determine the ethical attitude of Jesus ex-

[1] See for example Matt. 6 : 19, 20, 25, 34.

cept as we take account of his eschatology? If we deny he spoke the gruesome sentiments found at the close of certain verses in the Synoptics, no canon of criticism will permit us to affirm that he uttered only those moral precepts with which these verses begin. Clearly, then, before we can hope to know what Jesus taught we need to know something of the eschatology he shared with his fellow-Jews.

Every intelligent reader of the New Testament and more especially of the Epistles and Acts, has observed evidences of rivalry and party-spirit in the primitive Christian church. Parties were formed bearing rival names—Cephas, Apollos, Paul, Christ. Among the causes of division was difference of opinion as to the scope of Gospel propaganda. Was the message of Jesus intended only for Jews or for Gentiles also? On this issue, which was still debated at the time the Gospels were written, the authors take sides. And since it was but natural that sympathy for one or another of the two sides in the controversy would influence the transmission of Jesus' message, a prerequisite for deciding what he

taught will be a taking into account the fact that there was a division in the church, that the Gospel writers took sides and in so doing tended to report sayings of Jesus in terms of their respective sympathies. Thus, for example, in the tenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel Jesus is reported as charging his disciples not to go to the Samaritans and Gentiles, but only to the Jews. But on turning to Luke's Gospel we find no such restriction enjoined. On the contrary, the message is that the disciples should carry the Gospel to all the nations. Must we not conclude that in these two passages we see the work of a "Judaizing" and of a "Gentilizing" editor, each of whom in his own way, supplemented what was perhaps the original remark of Jesus, "Go ye forth and preach the gospel"? For, if we may judge from what we read in the seventh chapter of the earliest of the Gospels,[1] Jesus went wherever he had opportunity to preach and would have his disciples do likewise, raising no question whatever as to race, class, or creed. The only question with him seems to have been one of time, *i. e.*,

[1] Luke 24 : 47.

whether the disciples would have time to do more than visit "the cities of Israel before the Son of Man shall be come."[1] Jesus had said to them that there were "some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom,"[2] showing once more the influence of eschatological thought, determining his decision as to the limits of missionary journeyings. And herein all three Gospels are again agreed. Similarly when judging the harsh treatment which both Matthew and Mark report Jesus to have accorded the Syro-Phœnician woman and which is wholly wanting in Luke's gospel,[3] we must ask whether we have not here again a case in which the prerequisite we are considering must be remembered. In other words, did not Judaizing editors reproduce, with pronounced partisan feeling, the original narrative of a Gentile woman who sought help from Jesus for her child? And did not Luke omit the story from his version because of his Gentile sympathies? Such questions are typical

[1] Matt. 10 : 23.
[2] Matt. 16 : 28; Mark 9 : 1; Luke 9 : 27.
[3] Matt. 15 : 22; Mark 7 : 25.

of the kind we must ask again and again in our reading of the Synoptics, in order that we may beware of ascribing to Jesus statements which, as they stand, reflect partisanship in his biographers.

Just here let me interpose a word concerning a curious delusion entertained by many radicals, to the effect that if only they were "orthodox" they could leave these prerequisites severely alone and come into immediate knowledge of what Jesus taught! But, for this seemingly comforting assumption there is no warrant whatever. The fact is that modern orthodox scholarship repudiates the notion that one has only to "bow the head" and "reverently transcend" every difficulty one encounters. The foremost orthodox New Testament scholar of the last century in England was the lamented Congregationalist, Edwin A. Abbott, author of the article "Gospels" in the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Referring to discrepancies and contradictions in Gospel accounts of Jesus' teachings, he declared that these are not to be treated in any pious and cowardly fashion, but rather to be faced and

investigated frankly and fearlessly, in the spirit of entire readiness to adjust ourselves to the results whatever they may be. In this noble and inspiring attitude Dr. Abbott has the support of many another foreign scholar within and without the Congregational Church—writers who hold with him that there are real difficulties attending the question of the ethics of Jesus, that we should expect to find them, considering the mode in which the Gospels were compiled, and that the only "way out" is the way of reverent and critical scholarship. Among these representatives of orthodoxy is Professor Wendt of the University of Heidelberg, a Lutheran in religion. His little brochure on the life of Jesus makes it clear that to be orthodox is no guarantee of escape from Gospel difficulties, and that we must endeavor to determine exactly what Jesus taught in precisely the same way that we try to decide what Plato taught, applying to the Gospels "the same critical methods we apply to the Dialogues."

Here in the United States are independent Presbyterians, like Professor McGiffert; in-

dependent Baptists, like Professor Foster; independent Congregationalists, like Professor Bacon; independent Episcopalians, like Professor Nash; all of whom assent to the proposition that to know just what Jesus taught is a problem fraught with difficulties from which there is no escape, no matter how "orthodox" one may be.

We have thus far considered six prerequisites for knowing just what Jesus taught. They all alike concern the Gospel records or their writers. First, we must have some acquaintance with the methods and results of the higher criticism because these help us over difficulties relating to variations and discrepancies in the recorded teachings of Jesus. Second, we must choose the Synoptics rather than the Fourth Gospel as our source of information, because the latter aims principally, as we have seen, at presenting a theory of the person of Jesus and uses the Synoptic material as a means to that end. Third, we must take account of differences in the Synoptics where they occur in reports of one and the same incident or saying of Jesus. Fourth, manuscripts and papyri

fragments, discovered since the authorized and revised editions of the New Testament (1611 and 1885) were published, must be reckoned with, because from these sources considerable fresh information has been derived relating to what Jesus taught. Fifth, we must have some knowledge of the cosmological and theological ideas which Jesus shared with his Jewish contemporaries, because much of his teaching is bound up with these beliefs. Sixth, we must keep in mind, as we read the Gospels, the existence of two parties in the infant Church, because the Gospel writers took sides and their sympathies sometimes affected their report of what Jesus said and did.

Passing now from these prerequisites to another group, those which concern the readers rather than the records and their writers, we shall see that here again certain conditions obtain without the fulfilment of which we shall not only fail to know just what Jesus taught, but, what is worse, attribute to him ideas for which he is not in the least responsible. Permit me to preface the consideration of these prerequisites by saying that if

any criticism of mine concerning the personality or teachings of Jesus be construed as exhibiting an inimical or iconoclastic spirit they will be misconstrued. And it will be in regretted contradiction to my purpose if I let slip a single careless word that shall wound the reverence of even the most sensitive soul.

First, then, in this group is *banishment from the reader's mind of preconceptions as to what Jesus taught.* Most persons, perhaps all of us, are in some measure victimized by prejudices, predilections, biases. We come to the Gospels with certain convictions touching the character and contents of Jesus' message. Equipped with these we read the record and spontaneously accept as genuine whatever accords with our preconceptions and promptly reject as spurious whatever fails to fall in with them. A popular and pernicious practice this, reading the Gospels and eliminating, by a sheer *tour de force,* all that does not measure up to the complete and faultless system of teaching attributed to Jesus at the start. Henry Ward Beecher once compared people to a magnet that had

been passed through a dish of sand containing iron filings and which, when it emerged, was completely covered with them. So people go through the Gospels and come forth from their reading bristling all over with their favorite texts. All those which were out of harmony with the predetermined ideas of what Jesus would teach were quietly ignored as "interpolations" or as "editorial glosses." It is related of William Ellery Channing, the distinguished Unitarian divine, that whenever his pulpit readings included the twenty-third chapter of Matthew's Gospel, he invariably lowered his voice at the verse where begins the series of maledictions Jesus pronounced upon the despised Pharisees. The words "woe, woe unto you, Pharisees," the preacher read with soft, modulated tones, surprising and disconcerting his congregation. The saintly Channing naïvely disregarded the prerequisite we are considering. He approached the Gospels with the preconceived idea that Jesus could not feel *intense* moral indignation, much less outright hatred toward these his ubiquitous and irrepressible opponents. Hence, the pulpit-

readings were determined in tone by the preconception. But if there is any one part of the Gospel tradition more strongly attested than another, it is that which pertains to Jesus and his dealings with the Pharisees. Not once is he reported as uttering a single sympathetic word for them. Nowhere is it as much as intimated that his hatred was not of them but of their hypocrisy, formalism, and craftiness. None of the New Testament writers represents him as showing toward the Pharisees that forgiving, tolerant, kindly spirit which he besought his disciples to feel toward all men. How many passages there are, exhibiting, on Jesus' part, toward these Pharisees, a deep-seated, bitter antagonism and intolerance.[1] I hold, therefore, that if we go to these records with minds free from preconception as to what Jesus was and said, we shall feel forced to confess that these are utterances of his, as well authenticated as any parts of the Sermon on the Mount.

Some years ago, I was invited to assist a San Francisco clergyman at his Sunday

[1] Matt. 5 : 20; 16 : 6; 13 : 14 *et seq.;* Mark 8 : 15; Luke 12 : 1; 11 : 39, 42-44.

morning service. He selected for my scripture reading the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Pointing to the second paragraph of the sixth verse, which reads, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea," he remarked, "Jesus never said that, please omit this verse." But never yet have I been able to justify his contention that the sentiment is unauthentic. And if this verse be invalidated, on what warrantable ground shall any other escape deletion? The incident illustrates once more the baneful practice of approaching the record with particular preconceptions and promptly squaring it with these whenever it runs contrary to them. Now it is quite true that the Gospels ascribe certain statements to Jesus which we are practically certain he never uttered. But the reason for our so believing is not their incompatibility with a preconceived idea of his character and teaching, but their inconsistency with the evidence in support of what he actually taught. Such a statement, for example, is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Mark, "He who believeth not shall be

damned." We reject this, not, however, because it fails to conform to a preconception of Jesus as the ideal teacher, but solely because it is missing in the two earliest extant manuscripts of the Bible. Part of a narrative, it is, which formed no portion of the original Gospel.[1] In Channing and the California clergyman we see prototypes of the people who first form a mental picture of an absolutely perfect person and then proceed to find it embodied in the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. Whatever appears as irrational or unethical is at once reinterpreted to appear differently, or else designated "an interpolation," or perchance as "an obvious misinterpretation of the evangelists, steeped in the superstitions of their time." Either what is reported must tally with the preconceived idea of the teacher's person, or be relegated to the realm of the unauthentic and unwarrantable. Banishment of preconceptions must therefore be set down as the prime prerequisite in the group we are now considering.

A second prerequisite for deciding what

[1] Mark 16 : 9-20.

Jesus taught is *avoidance of the ventriloquism which puts into the mouth of Jesus ideas that are modern in origin and content.* We must refrain from reading *into* the teachings of Jesus thoughts wholly foreign to his time and place and for the holding of which he had neither the necessary antecedent education nor inheritance. We take unethical liberties with the records when we interpret first-century statements to make them express twentieth-century ideas. Such crowding of new meanings into old language not only creates confusion of thought but also blocks all earnest effort to determine what Jesus taught. Take, for example, that impressive little book, entitled "The Christ Ideal," written by Horatio Dresser, an expositor of the "New Thought." With sustained patience we read his series of chapters, confident we shall come upon a statement of that "ideal" he proposed to present. But we are rewarded, at last, not with any knowledge of the Christ ideal but only of Mr. Dresser's ideal. For he has made Jesus the mouthpiece of the message which his own "New Thought" training has worked out.

What he calls "the Voice of Jesus" is really his own voice transferred to Jesus. Mr. Dresser has ignored this second of the personal prerequisites for knowledge of what Jesus actually taught and in consequence he has produced a book which, with all its admirable features, leaves us confused and unsatisfied so far as acquaintance with Jesus and his ideal is concerned.

This criticism applies with equal force to that series of brochures of which "In His Steps," by C. M. Sheldon, and "If Christ Came to Chicago," by W. T. Stead, are types. The avowed purpose of these authors was to show just what Jesus would do were he to return to earth and find himself placed in the situations described. But what we really learn is what these authors would do, acting according to their enlightened conscience. They simply make Jesus the spokesman of their own carefully thought-out sociological conclusions. Thus our knowledge of Jesus is not furthered in the least, while the unsuspecting spectator, who does not see the ventriloquistic process, interprets what he finds as representing the thought of Jesus.

In the same class with this literature, that takes no cognizance of the prerequisites we are considering, is the so-called "Aquarian Gospel." This is a pseudonymous work in which the writer declares that to him has been revealed secret knowledge concerning Jesus' teachings for which the world hitherto was unprepared. The race has emerged from "Aries" and "Taurus" and entered into "Aquarius." Hence the title of the "Gospel." Its most characteristic chapters relate to the pre-"Christine" ministry of Jesus. The author has transferred from the "astral" records, to which access has been vouchsafed him, an account of the travels of Jesus with the great priests of India, Persia, Egypt, and Greece, and the theosophical knowledge he acquired from them. Then follows a series of discourses in which the writer's occultism is put into the mouth of Jesus, making him the exponent of esoteric systems of belief wholly at variance with the plain, exoteric Judaism of his time. The remarkable features of his book are the egregiousness of its ventriloquism, the story of its astral origin, and the serious reception accorded

it by people whose intelligence elsewhere is unquestioned, notably the Congressman from Wyoming, who provided the "Gospel" with an introduction.

It seemed worth while to cite these as typical examples of an all too common practice because it is on the increase. In proportion as liberalism spreads liberties are taken with New Testament statements and personal preconceptions are given a free rein, to the injury alike of text and reader.

We see the same popular and pernicious practice illustrated once more in the case of the socialist, who eagerly turns to the Gospels with the purpose of finding there full confirmation of his own social creed. He quotes verses at random regardless of their context or intended meaning, to show that Jesus was a Socialist, a prophet of social evolution, his soul on fire with class consciousness. But to construe the familiar utterances of Jesus, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the Gospel to the poor"; "Woe unto you who are rich"; "How hardly shall they who have riches enter the Kingdom of Heaven"; "Blessed be ye poor"—as

evidences of his Socialism, is sheer distortion of the record. Nothing can be clearer from an impartial unprejudiced reading of the Gospels than that Jesus addressed himself primarily to the individual heart and conscience. The problem of changing economic and social conditions, which lies at the heart of Socialism, did not concern him in the least, because he looked to God for the transformation of the politico-social order. Only a little while, he believed, and the Kingdom of God would be ushered in. Consequently for him the one, sole, vital issue of the hour was a changing of men's hearts and wills, fitting them for membership in the new Kingdom that might come like "a thief in the night," suddenly, with no warning. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour," was his solemn and practical admonition. He came not to readjust social conditions, not to attempt a reorganization of society on untried economic principles. He came solely to refine men's lives, to quicken in each individual the sense of his divine origin and the infinite possibilities for moral progress inhering in each, even in the

very lowest. If, then, we would know just what Jesus taught it is clear that there are preliminary conditions which must be complied with. And these concern not only the records and their authors, but also, and to a far more vital degree, ourselves, the readers. And whatever difficulties may attend our compliance with the former conditions, the latter are wholly within our power of fulfilment, depending solely upon the intensity and depth of our desire to see things as they are rather than as we would wish them to be or as we thought, in advance, they were.

VI

THE CRUCIFIXION

The public ministry of Jesus, according to the first three Gospels, was divided into two main parts; the one Galilean, the other Judean, the former centering at Capernaum, the latter in Jerusalem; the one extending over a period of eighteen months, the other lasting a little over a week. During his northern ministry Jesus came into frequent conflict with the Pharisees; in the south his chief opponents were Sadducees. These collisions with the two leading religious parties of his day culminated in the crucifixion. Any attempt, therefore, to understand the tragedy of the cross, must involve some knowledge of these two parties, their distinctive characteristics and functions, and the causes that brought Jesus into conflict with them.

The Sadducees were the wealthy, conserva-

tive, aristocratic, exclusive party, the representatives of official piety. Into their hands had been committed the hereditary privilege of conducting the Temple services. From among them the priests were selected. To them also was entrusted the judiciary, hence their closeness to the Roman authorities.

The Pharisees represented the aristocracy of intellect and erudition. The synagogue-teaching was under their control. They were the exponents of unofficial, or personal, piety. As their name indicates, they were separatists, holding themselves aloof from the masses, priding themselves upon their punctilious, uncompromising devotion to ceremonialism.

The Sadducees stood squarely by the Pentateuch alone, denying and rejecting every belief for which the first five books of the Old Testament provided no warrant, beliefs derived from contact with the Babylonians, Persians and Greeks during centuries of Jewish subjugation to these peoples.

The Pharisees, more liberally disposed, believing in progressive Judaism, freely adopted and adapted these elements of foreign

faith, including belief in hierarchies of angels and of demons, in resurrection from the dead and future punishment. The mass of "oral" law, developed from the Pentateuchal legislation, this too, the Pharisees endorsed and sustained as binding upon all Israelites. As a class, they constituted the best element of the community; stern moralists, strict legalists, religious liberalists, painfully insistent upon obedience to the letter of the law, intense sticklers for form, they yet embodied as far as they could the fundamental notion of Israel's holiness and so became peculiarly the national party, the Puritan pillars of Judaism.

But just as there are Christians and Christians, so there were Pharisees and Pharisees. And as all church members are not good members, so all Pharisees were not good Pharisees. Among them, as among Christians, there were "wolves in sheeps' clothing," hypocrites, extremists, fanatics, ultra-formalists, exhibitors of the signs of piety, while inwardly "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." It was against this class of Pharisees, rather than against the

party as a whole, that Jesus hurled his untempered denunciations, even as had the rabbinical writers of the Talmud before him. They distinguished seven kinds of Pharisees and held that only one of these is worthy of respect, the kind who took Abraham for their pattern, who "do good and delight in the commandments of the Lord." Be it understood, then, that it was not against the Pharisees, as a class, that Jesus flung his merciless invectives, so much as at these, the least worthy representatives of the party, men who decried spontaneity in religion and blocked the free play of soul that breaks new ground and gets new visions. All three biographers of Jesus report his offendings of these Pharisees. Mark, the earliest Gospel, recounts in successive chapters a series of occasions on which they appear in open hostility to Jesus, so that he is constrained at last to terminate further controversy by retiring to the outlying region of Cæsarea Philippi. He had offended them, first, by associating with outcasts of society, the dregs of the community, the very class from whom these Pharisees kept altogether aloof, to avoid contamination

and ceremonial uncleanness. Over against their aristocratic, legalistic exclusiveness stood the democratic, unrestrained inclusiveness of Jesus, the breadth and warmth of which we are helped to understand if we imagine some bishop or other church dignitary living on terms of open friendship and hospitality with the keeper of some low resort.

When these Pharisees criticized Jesus for the company he kept, his simple answer was, "Not they who are healthy but they who are sick need a physician." Like all great souls before his time and since, Jesus estimated men not according to their wealth, or social position, not by the residence-district in which they happened to live, nor again, by their ancestry. He looked upon them simply as children of a universal Father and as possessing infinite possibilities for improvement.

A second instance of his giving offence to the Pharisees was the granting permission to his disciples "to pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath day," and his own readiness, on that day, to heal the sick. But in his reply to the censures heaped upon him Jesus proved that he knew the Law more fully than

his opponents. This inevitably made them feel small and cheap and thus aggravated the antagonism they already felt toward him. The plain truth was that never at any time had Jesus violated a Sabbath ordinance or permitted his disciples to do so. The Pharisees had failed to take note of emergencies for which the Law makes allowance. When faint with hunger on the Sabbath a man may pluck ears of corn. And all cases of critical illness might be legitimately cared for on the Sabbath. Thus did Jesus prove that he came not, as the Pharisees held, to destroy the Law, but to fulfil or carry out its injunctions. When they came to him asking for "a sign" whereby to demonstrate the divine origin of his power, Jesus refused. When they explained the cures he had wrought as the work of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he confronted their theory with the searching question, "Can Satan drive out Satan?"[1] When they accused him of blasphemy because he presumed to forgive sins, he reminded them of the then accepted belief

[1] All diseases were supposed to be due to indwelling demons.

that all sickness is the result of sin and a form of punishment, and that, consequently, to say "thy sins are forgiven thee" is only tantamount to "take up thy bed and walk."

When they saw his disciples sitting at meat without having first washed their hands, they called his attention to this violation of the Law. But he, perceiving the externalism of their piety, promptly assured them that in their passionate devotion to the traditions of men they had set at naught the commandments of God. And in order that there might be no misunderstanding of their meaning he added, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

The immediate and inevitable effect of these successive encounters was to intensify the already bitter antagonism of the Pharisees toward Jesus and provoke them to the point of scheming to undermine his ministry. On the other hand, the effect of the controversies upon Jesus was to convince him that a crisis had been reached, that to continue preaching and healing in the province of

Galilee, where the Pharisees were particularly in evidence, would be futile and that the time had come for him to go to the headquarters of Judaism and there preach his message among its official representatives. During his brief stay at Cæsarea-Philippi he decides upon this course, abandoning his Galilean ministry for the untried territory of Judea, confiding to his disciples the intuition that grave danger and tribulation await him.

Before we follow him to Jerusalem let us pause to note the fact that while none of these collisions with the Pharisees, nor all of them together, could have precipitated a crucifixion, yet there can be no question that they must be counted as a remote and indirect cause of the tragedy of the Cross.

Whether Jesus rode or walked the two short miles to Jerusalem from Bethany, where he had stopped en route, is a question of little or no importance. But it is a question of primary importance whether or not his entry was a *triumphal* one, amid Messianic acclaim and the cry, "Hosanna! Save us, thou Son of David!" For if it was a triumphal entry it would mean that Jesus had

turned his back upon his own ethical and spiritual conception of the Messiahship and was now championing the popular political idea of the office. It would mean that he who had persistently stood, and in the face of constant misunderstanding, for the *prophetic* idea of the Messiah as suggested by what we read in the fifty-third and sixtieth chapters of Isaiah, had now headed a royalist movement and was prepared to lead a political insurrection. Yet nothing is clearer than that the Synoptic Gospels nowhere present Jesus as an exponent of popular Messianic speculation and enthusiasm. Equally clear it is that Jesus felt he must in some way associate himself with the popular demand for a Deliverer and regard himself as the Messiah. For in those days, in Palestine, the Messianic hope stood in the same relation to popular sentiment that home-rule does to the Irish peasantry. And precisely as a Gladstone could not have ignored the latter, so Jesus could not have disregarded the former. But just what he believed about himself in relation to the Messiahship, just what the precise content of the

word Messiah was for him, we cannot tell. The data are insufficient to warrant definite assertion. Modern scholarship forbids indulgence in precise description and intimates that perpetual uncertainty must attach to much of our thought upon it. On the other hand, no doubt whatsoever gathers about the contribution Jesus made to the traditional Messianic conception. He reinterpreted the national hope in *ethical* terms. He regarded himself as the Messiah in a higher sense than that of a political Deliverer. His function was not to destroy Roman oppression but human sin, wherever it obtained, in order that the greatest possible number of men and women might enjoy participation in the Kingdom of God when it should come. Side by side with his ethical interpretation of the Messiahship stood the inherited belief in the good time coming when from on high there would be established a new social order to take the place of the existing one. Whether he expected to be the agent of the divine act of transformation and usher in the new kingdom is, and perhaps always will be, an open question. But, be this as it may, it was as

an ethical and spiritual Deliverer that Jesus meant to minister to his fellowmen, caring supremely for this transcendent interpretation of the Messiah and holding the inherited political conception all the while in abeyance. Be doubtful what may concerning the details of his thought on the subject, this conception of his mission stands clearly forth in the record, and, above all, in the passage which reports the confession he made to his disciples that he regarded himself as the Messiah, but besought them to tell no man. For it was certain to be misunderstood, or, if his meaning were grasped, it would have been ridiculed and made a matter of sport and mockery by a people enamored of the political conception of the office and impatient of any other, even one that was ethical and spiritual, in content. And the fact that the Gospels present this non-political, non-popular interpretation of the Messiahship would seem to prove, more effectively perhaps than any other argument, the historicity of Jesus. Someone must have conceived and impersonated the ethical conception of the office as against the popular, political idea, to have

made possible the portraiture the Gospels present. At the same time it is apparent that the biographers of Jesus regarded him as the expected Messiah, and wrote the story of his life from the standpoint of this preconception. Hence it does not surprise us to find all three reporting a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Moreover, holding the belief that the Old Testament foreshadowed Messiah's career and finding in Zechariah's prophecy the words, "behold thy King cometh riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass," these biographers promptly applied the passage to Jesus. And since there was no other occasion upon which he could have thus ridden upon an ass except on this journey to Jerusalem, the quotation found apt application to this incident. Given the premises on which the writers based their study of Jesus' life and the conclusion they reached follows logically enough. Their syllogism ran: The Old Testament portrays Messiah's career. Jesus is the Messiah. Therefore the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus' career. It does not surprise us then to find that, in harmony with this tendency to

see prophetic intimations of Messiah's life in the Old Testament, the whole course of Jesus' experience from birth to death was cast into this frame. To be sure, the application of scripture passages was often made in entire disregard of their original sense. And many a deficiency in the recollections of what Jesus did was supplied by appeal to passages that seemed to relate to Jesus' life. As an index of the astounding results to which this practice sometimes led, take the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, as reported in the Gospel of Matthew. Here Jesus is represented as riding on two animals, Mark and Luke mentioning but one. The first Evangelist, however, explains the reason for what he reports. It is that the saying might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

> Behold, thy King cometh unto thee:
> Lowly and riding upon an ass,
> And upon a colt the foal of an ass.[1]

Now it is a characteristic of Hebrew poetry that the second line or clause in a verse

[1] Zech. 9 : 9.

rhythmically repeats what has already been said in the first line. But the Evangelist, apparently ignorant of this feature—this poetic paralleling of a statement—supposed the prophet to refer to two animals. He therefore introduced both into his narrative and virtually represented Jesus as riding into the city on both! "And they brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."[1]

On arriving at Jerusalem, Jesus went directly to the temple. No sooner had he crossed the threshold of its outer court than his eye fell upon a spectacle revolting in the extreme—hucksters and money-changers trading within the sacred precincts. Pausing only to make a whip of cords, he gave vent to his righteous indignation by driving the desecrators out from the hallowed enclosure. An act of heroic imprudence it was, thrilling us anew each time we read the inspiring story of it.

It was the week of the Passover Feast, the festival which celebrated the birthday of Hebrew independence, after the long years of

[1] Matt. 21 : 7; compare Mark 11 : 7 and Luke 19 : 35.

bondage under Egyptian rule. Booths had been erected from which to sell the lambs that were to be eaten at the Passover supper. Doves, too, were for sale, in order that mothers of infants might offer the sacrifice ordained by the Law.[1] Sparrows, "two for a farthing," "cleansed" lepers might buy, to participate in the festival, as the Levitical legislation provided.[2] Tables for money-changers were set up in order that persons with large coins, like the talent, might exchange them for smaller pieces and also that the civil Roman might be changed for Jewish ceremonial money, denarii for shekels, since none but these were accepted in the Temple.

Now these booths and tables, incident to the Passover Festival, had been stationed within the outer court of the Temple, known as the Court of the Gentiles. Possibly the hucksters and money-changers had pressed further in, beyond the "gate beautiful," to the next inner court. But whatever the part of the Temple-grounds in which Jesus found

[1] Lev. 15 : 29.
[2] Lev. 14 : 4.

these traders stationed, the Law explicitly prohibited the conducting of this business within the Temple walls. Imagine, then, the feelings of Jesus when he discovered this unholy traffic, this brazen profanation of sacred proprieties in the interests of business, this conversion of a "house of prayer" into a market-place. Instantly he drives the transgressors out of the consecrated enclosure, saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer unto all nations."

Who were the people affected by this expulsion? They were the Sadducees, who had control of all the business connected with the Passover Feast. From the Talmud we learn of one Annan, by name, having a monopoly of this business. We are told also of a son of Gamaliel, teacher of the apostle Paul, interfering to break the exorbitant prices that were asked for sacrificial animals and birds. Rabbi Hirsch, of Chicago, the most learned of living rabbis in the United States, assures us that this Annan is identical with the Annas of the Gospels, father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest, and who, because of this kinship, was specially priv-

ileged in having the ear of Pontius Pilate. Thus, by his blow at the interests of the monopolist, Jesus was brought into direct conflict with the most powerful friends of the Roman governor. And this antagonism must have been greatly aggravated if he said —what has been attributed to him by the author of the Fourth Gospel—that any place was just as good as the Temple for worship if only one worshipped "in spirit and in truth." For such a remark would have done an industrial injury to all temple-trade—a striking parallel to which is furnished by the effect of Paul's speech at Ephesus upon the local manufacturers of shrines and images of Diana, when he proposed a substitute-worship for that of the goddess.[1]

All that the irate Sadducees had to do was to take Jesus to Pontius Pilate and denounce him as a rebel, as an insurgent, as a dangerous character, to be quickly put out of the way. And while they were busy devising the best means by which to achieve the overthrow of Jesus, he was in a near-by garden,

[1] Acts 19 : 23.

realizing the awful seriousness of the situation, weighing the tremendous issues of the hour and imploring Divine guidance, while about him lay his trusted disciples, asleep.

Here, in this garden, he was arrested by a band of men, among whom were servants of the high priest to whose house he was at once deported. The disciples, according to Matthew's account, made an attempt at resistance. It was promptly checked by Jesus with the words, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[1]

Just what the charge was upon which he was arraigned is not clear.

The Gospel of Mark states that an effort was made to find witnesses who would testify against him, but they "contradicted each other." Then there came into the courtroom a "false witness" testifying that he had heard Jesus say he would "destroy this temple . . . and in three days build another." Caiaphas, therefore, after hearing many witnesses and finding that their testimony did not agree, broke out with the question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the

[1] Matt. 26 : 52.

Blessed?" And Jesus replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Thereupon, the high priest rent his clothes as a symbol that blasphemy had been uttered. "Ye have heard the blasphemy," he cries. "What think ye?" And they all with one accord "condemned him to be worthy of death."

With reference to the narratives of Jesus' trial there are two or three important points to be noted.[1] In the first place, all the accounts of what transpired at the private session in Caiaphas' house and before the Sanhedrin are grounded upon conjecture only. For though Peter followed his Master to the palace of the high priest, he sat in the hall with the servants awaiting the issue of the trial.[2] None of the disciples was present, nor was any reporter there. None but members of the Sanhedrin were admitted.

Undoubtedly the disciples *assumed* that Jesus would be asked the question, "Art thou the Messiah?" But whether he was

[1] Mark 14 : 55 *et seq.;* compare Matt. 26 and Luke 22.
[2] Matt. 26 : 58, 69, 75.

asked it and what he answered if the question was put to him, we cannot tell. The Synoptics record three forms of the question and three different answers.[1] Perhaps he maintained a dignified silence. On the other hand, it is equally possible that he made answer in the affirmative, declaring himself the Messiah, but meaning thereby the prophetic-ethical, not the political-regal type of Messiah, and feeling that to attempt an explanation of the difference would have been futile. His spiritual conception of the office would certainly have met with no response in the hearts of men impatient for the coming of the expected political Deliverer. Hence he may have said: "I am the Christ." But whether he answered or kept silence, his doom was already sealed. His enemies were determined to put him out of the way.

A second point in the narrative to be noted is that if "blasphemy" was the charge, Jesus was not guilty of it. According to the Law, blasphemy consists in pronouncing the ineffable name[2] (Yahweh). Jesus, however,

[1] Mark 14 : 61; Matt. 26 : 64; Luke 22 : 67.
[2] Lev. 24.

substituted the word power—"Ye shall see the Son of Man coming with power." As for his other utterances, "I am" (the Christ), "I will destroy this temple and in three days build another," neither of these could be lawfully construed as blasphemy.

Once more, we must note the fact that the conviction of Jesus by the Sanhedrin, the supreme court, was flagrantly illegal. The illegality of it appears in the following five counts. And we have warrant for so thinking in the Talmud, which has preserved for us, in the tract entitled "Sanhedrin," full details of legal procedure:

1.—The Sanhedrin could not convene at night, for all trials involving capital punishment had to be begun and ended by day.

2.—The Sanhedrin could not convene on the day before the Sabbath, or on the day before a festival.

3.—This highest court could not condemn an accused man on the same day that his case was tried.

4.—The Sanhedrin could not convict without the evidence of two witnesses.

5.—In "blasphemy" cases, the court could

not condemn unless the utterance was an unmistakable blasphemy.

As "the right of the sword" was no longer a prerogative of the Jewish authorities, they having been dispossessed of it since the year 6 A. D., when Judea came directly under Roman jurisdiction, the Sanhedrin had no alternative but to send Jesus to Pilate. The Roman procurator, after cross-examination of Jesus, felt wholly disposed to release him. But after hearing the protestations and entreaties of his Jewish subjects, who insisted that Jesus was an insurrectionist and that as such he ought not to be set free by Cæsar's representative, Pilate adopted the politic course of allowing the Jews to deal with Jesus according to their own law. But to put Jesus to death was Rome's right alone. Only as they might secure permission from Pilate could they carry out their death sentence. And he, after further deliberation, "handed him over to them to be crucified." And they crucified him. Such is the testimony of the earliest witness to the text of the Gospels, the Sinaitic-Syriac palimpsest manuscript discovered on Mt. Sinai in

1892 by Mrs. Agnes Lewis of London. In our authorized and revised versions of the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark we read: "He (Pilate) delivered Jesus to be crucified."[1] But in this recently discovered manuscript the important words "to them" are inserted after "Jesus," thus indicating explicitly that Pilate handed Jesus over to the Jews for crucifixion. The self-same reading appears in Codex Cadabrigiensis, as it is called, a manuscript in the library of Cambridge University which ranks next in antiquity to the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts. "Jesus he took and handed him over to them (*αὐτοῖς*) that they might crucify him" (*ἵνα σταυρωσῶσιν αὐτόν*).

Thus our earliest extant witness, the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript, together with the Cambridge Codex, supports the contention that Pilate gave his sanction for the execution of Jesus by the Jewish authorities. Luke's version furnishes some corroboration of this textual evidence, for his reading is: "He delivered Jesus to their (the Jews') will."[2]

[1] Matt. 26 : 26; Mark 15 : 15.
[2] Luke 23 : 25; compare Matt. 26 : 26 and Mark 15 : 15.

The popular opinion that Jesus was executed by Roman soldiers is based on the supposition that crucifixion was exclusively Roman, not a Jewish mode of punishment. But, as Professor Schmidt has pointed out, in his illuminating pages on this subject,[1] the ancient Jewish law included hanging, or impaling, among the authorized forms of execution, and the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians,[2] identified hanging with the Roman crucifixion. Furthermore, Josephus tells us that Alexander Jannaeus, who was King of the Jews in the year 100 A. D., ordered fifty rebels to be crucified,[3] proving that the Jews supplemented the ordinances of their Law with the Roman practice of crucifixion. Thus Pilate's permission, accorded the Jews, to crucify Jesus may have served as a historical precedent for such eclecticism.

Reviewing the causes which culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus, we recognize three as having been operative in direct succession, as follows:

[1] Schmidt: "The Prophet of Nazareth," p. 286 *et seq.*
[2] Gal. 3 : 13.
[3] Schmidt: "The Prophet of Nazareth," p. 289.

First, the hostility Jesus engendered in the Pharisees, who repudiated his radicalism and despised his democratic and cosmopolitan spirit. Second, the hostility he engendered in the Sadducees, whose business interests he interfered with, and who, having the judiciary under their control, were empowered to convict Jesus and to influence Pontius Pilate in his final pronouncement. Third, the cowardly, craven attitude of Pilate himself toward his subjects and toward Jesus. He who could "see no fault" in Jesus, he who had it in his power to set him free, was, nevertheless, actuated by purely selfish considerations. He saw a chance to score with the people over whom he ruled and a chance to win the approbation of his superior officer at Rome. Therefore, he gave permission to the Jews to gratify their wish and crucify Jesus. Remembering that Jesus was a Jew, not a Christian, and recalling the fact that, as yet, there was no Christianity, it is obviously absurd that Christian persecutors of Jews should base their antipathy upon the Jewish crucifixion of Jesus. Moreover, it should be also remembered that the same

traditionalism, the same opposition to new teaching, that was manifested by the crucifying Jews has been also exhibited by their spiritual relatives in other religions toward teachers whose gospel they could not appreciate.

It was in devotion to a sublime purpose that Jesus lost his life, namely, to fulfill the function of a prophetic, as against a regal, Messiah. Not to deliver his fellow-countrymen from Roman oppression—God would soon do that by miraculous intervention—but to deliver human souls from the despotism of sin. Not to set up a new political organization—God would provide that in the new Kingdom so soon to be—but to establish a pattern of moral living. Not to be a Messiah who would escape suffering and crucifixion, but rather one who, by his own death, would show forth the truth that only in losing one's life does one save it. Such was the transcendent aim to which he dedicated his life.

The uniform tradition of the Synoptic Gospels is that Jesus uttered a cry of pain upon the cross and that, in accordance with the mercy-clause in the Jewish law, the pain

was numbed by application to his lips of a sponge dipped in wine and myrrh. According to the first two Gospels Jesus exclaimed: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" a quotation from the twenty-second Psalm. Professor Schmiedel, author of the article "Gospels," in the "Encyclopædia Biblica," includes this cry among the utterances of Jesus that are not to be doubted. Though usually construed as an expression of utter despair, a surrender of faith in God and in his own cause, yet the sequel to the cry proves that it was but a momentary misgiving. For he remains unfalteringly true to his purpose and instantly regains serenity of soul. On the other hand, the cry may be unhistorical after all. Would the Jews who heard it have confused the word "Eloi," meaning "my God," with an appeal to Elijah?[1] The Apocryphal Gospel of Peter, however, reports the sayings as, "My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me."

According to the third Gospel Jesus uttered no cry of God-forsakenness, but a trustful prayer: "Into thy hands I commit

[1] Mark 15 : 34.

my spirit." Here also is recorded the utterance of another prayer, offered but a few moments before the final word, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." But the authenticity of this touching prayer has been justly questioned because it is wanting in the Vatican manuscript, while in the Sinaitic it shows distinct marks of having been tampered with. The probability is that it represents a later rescension of the prayer of Stephen the martyr, who, when stoned to death, cried out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."[1]

Thus the testimony touching the cry of Jesus upon the cross leaves us uncertain as to its actual content. But that there was a cry, all the evangelists are agreed, and it indicates that the crucifixion was no mere drama, no "playing at suffering" on the part of a deity in disguise, but a real, intense human experience.

Within recent years it has been contended by certain representatives of the "school of radical criticism," which originated in Holland, that the crucifixion of Jesus is un-

[1] Acts 7 : 60.

historical, notwithstanding the successful denuding of the narratives of their elements of supernaturalism. Conspicuous among the exponents of this view is the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, canon of Rochester Cathedral, England and one of the foremost interpreters of the higher criticism of both the Old Testament and the New. For him the crucifixion stories are only "food for the soul" and void of historical content, a view which is, to say the least, open to considerable objection. On the other hand, it must be frankly admitted that to strip a story of supernatural elements and reduce it to the plane of the natural and possible, by no means establishes its historicity. The higher criticism, it is true, has made the crucifixion narratives acceptable to an age devoid of faith in supernaturalism, but this achievement does not confer upon them historical reality. A parallel instance is furnished by recent research in the realm of psychical science. Many a wonder-work reported in the Gospels has been shown, in the light of this research, to fall within the scope of the possible. But this by no means implies the actuality of the reported phe-

nomena. Similarly, when the crucifixion story has been shown to be within the limits of ordinary human experience, that does not bestow upon it historicity. Herein we all will agree with the "school of radical criticism" and we will seek to establish our belief in the crucifixion as a historical event on other and legitimate grounds. These must be sought in external and internal evidence. Under the latter category we include the testimony of certain Roman historians who flourished in the first and second century, notably Suetonius and Tacitus, and who make mention of the crucifixion as though it were the one fact concerning Jesus worthy to be recorded. And when we turn to the Gospels themselves and make due allowance for all that is untenable or doubtful in their reports, and for the fact that they were written with an eye to doctrine and to edification, the one point that stands out as most certain would seem to be the historical crucifixion itself, the ultimate actuality whence the differing narratives originated. Such at least is the conclusion to which the great majority of modern scholars have been led.

Nor must we fail to take note of the indirect testimony of the apostle Paul. Had there been no actual crucifixion of an historical Jesus, there would have been no missionary to the Gentiles preaching a new gospel of salvation. Had the crucifixion been only a spiritual fact, furnishing, as such, "food for the soul," the Pauline gospel of redemption would never have been preached. Thus does Paul's ministry serve to attest not only the crucifixion, but also the historicity of Jesus.

Finally, it should be observed that the suffering of Jesus on the cross is not to be compared with that related of those men and women who, in the middle ages, were the victims of cruelest persecution, tortured to death in iron-spiked revolving cages and other hideous devices for the production of the most excruciating pain. Why, then, have the sufferings of Jesus made an unparalleled impression upon the Christian millions? It is because in proportion to the moral worth of the sufferer so do we feel indignation at the suffering to which he has been subjected. And the spiritual greatness of Jesus, ground-

ed in his simple trust in God and in his sincere recognition of the essential worth inhering in every human soul as a child of God, that greatness in him was such as to attach an exceptional sense of horror to the suffering of the Cross.

VII

THE RESURRECTION

Permit me to remind you of what was stated in the introduction to this course, *viz.*, that the opinions expressed by a representative of an Ethical Society commit no one but the lecturer. Let me remind you also that the primary purpose of the course is not negative and iconoclastic, not to "pick the New Testament to pieces," but rather to build up knowledge of the truth, so far as it is in our power to attain it. This point needs fresh emphasis, because when criticism of the Gospels is indispensable to clearing the ground and laying solid foundations for the structure of positive knowledge, one easily gets the impression that the critical process is an end in itself, whereas it is only the necessary means to the ulterior end of arriving at truth on the questions at issue. No sub-

ject is ever desecrated by a consecrated search for truth concerning it. Therefore, when we approach the subject of the resurrection of Jesus we cannot take the attitude assumed by Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and other mediæval schoolmen, who set the story of the resurrection apart as something too sacred to be investigated. On the contrary, we hold that the very sanctity of the subject is in a measure conditioned by the verification of what is claimed concerning it. And just to the extent that we suspect the lurking of error will our sense of the sacredness involved be jeopardized. 'Tis in the spirit of Lessing's famous affirmation that we address ourselves to the endeavor of arriving at truth concerning the resurrection of Jesus. If God, said Lessing, would give me my choice between truth and the search for truth, I would unhesitatingly choose the latter. With him we feel profoundly persuaded of the moral value of such search, its beneficent reaction upon the character and upon the mind. Let us, then, in our reverent quest, begin with propositions about which there can be no dispute. The

more wonderful and strange any alleged event, the greater the amount of evidence required to establish belief in its occurrence. A physical resurrection of one actually dead will require an extraordinary amount of evidence to warrant our believing it, for it is the most stupendous of all reported events. The New Testament reports such an event in the experience of Jesus. What evidence is there to support belief in it? In the first place, we have to note that not one of the Gospels presents us with a first-hand report of what is recorded; not one of them gives us the testimony of an eye-witness as to what happened. The earliest of these reports (Mark) was prepared about forty years after Jesus' death. Upon these fundamental considerations we have already dwelt in a preceding lecture, and therefore they need not be now rehearsed. A second important point to be noted at the outset is that the triple tradition—the story of the life of Jesus in which all three of the Synoptic Gospels agree—contains no account of a miraculous return to life, nor of any ascension into heaven. For the resurrection and ascension

narratives at the end of the Gospel according to Mark, were no part of the original record, a fact to which we shall shortly return. A third point to be observed relates to what we have already seen, in the case of the temptation and healing narratives, *viz.*, that the account as given in the earliest Gospel grows with the telling, taking on more and more of the wonderful in the process of transmission from one generation to the next. So the simple, frank story of what followed the crucifixion, as told in Mark's Gospel, is enlarged upon in each of the succeeding narratives. To illustrate:

Mark: Three women find the tomb empty.

Matthew: Three women see the empty tomb *and the risen Lord.*

Luke: The women *and the disciples* see the empty tomb and the risen Lord.

Mark: The women told no one what they had seen and heard.

Matthew and Luke: The women report their observations and experiences.

Mark and Matthew make Galilee the scene of *an appearance* of Jesus to his disciples.

Luke makes Jerusalem and its vicinity

(not Galilee) the scene of *several appearances* of Jesus, and in firm bodily form, even eating and drinking and allowing himself to be touched.

Now, it is quite possible that one and the same event may be differently described by eye-witnesses, but they ought not to differ in such vital particulars as these just cited. Whether the tomb was guarded or not; whether, when Jesus appeared, Mary Magdalen was alone or not; whether Jesus appeared in Galilee or in Jerusalem; whether the women reported what they saw or kept silent about it; whether the events recorded required one day or eight days; on such important details we are warranted in expecting agreement, and the observed differences cannot be construed as of the kind eye-witnesses reporting the event would be prone to exhibit.

Recall for a moment the account of the closing scene of Jesus' life as given by the Evangelist Mark. Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock and died at three o'clock, the death process having taken six hours. Before sunset Joseph of Arimathea obtained

permission to take the body from the cross, because it was unlawful to bury anyone on the Sabbath. He deposits the body in a cool rock-hewn tomb. Thirty-six hours later three women visit the tomb and find it empty. A young man clothed in white, seated at the entrance, tells them that Jesus, whom they seek, is risen and that if they will go to Galilee they will find him there, just as he had said to them, "And they went out . . .; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid." No explanation is given of the disappearance of Jesus, nothing indeed but the opinion of a young man as to what had transpired. Then follows a paragraph of twelve verses, from the ninth to the twentieth, closing the Gospel with an amplification of what is recorded in the preceding eight verses. This "appendix" to the Gospel recounts a series of post-crucifixion appearances of Jesus—to Mary Magdalen, to two disciples and to the eleven whom he upbraided for their unbelief in the report that he had risen and been seen by them who brought the report. "Then after the Lord had spoken unto

them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

Ever since Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript in the convent of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai it has been known that this appendix was no part of the original Gospel according to Mark. For not only is it wanting in this, the earliest extant Greek manuscript of the Bible, and missing, too, in the Vatican manuscript, of equal antiquity, but it is also no part of the Sinaitic-Syriac palimpsest discovered by Mrs. Lewis at the same convent on Mount Sinai in 1892, a version that harks back to a third century Syriac edition of the Gospels, and, as such, antedates the two earliest Greek manuscripts by at least a century as a witness to the text of the Gospels.

A further reason for discrediting this appendix is the fact that a "Peshito"-Syriac version of the Gospels—the original manuscript of which must have been written about the middle of the second century, having been quoted by the early Christian Fathers —not only lacks the closing twelve verses in the Gospel of Mark as we have it, but, after

the eighth verse of the last chapter, adds the words: "Here endeth the Gospel of Mark."

Additional discredit attaches to the appendix when we observe the mysterious blank in the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts just where later ones exhibit the twelve verses composing the appendix. Prof. Albert Edmunds of Philadelphia, to whom I am indebted for knowledge of this striking feature of the close of the Markan Gospel, has also called attention to the unfinished character of verse eight of the last chapter of this Gospel.[1] It ends with the Greek particle, γαρ, meaning "because," and the abruptness of this ending is most apparent when read in the original, ("ἐφοβοῦντο γαρ,") a termination as anomalous in Greek as would be the word "because" at the close of an English sentence. "They were afraid because" . . . So reads the genuine Markan Gospel, closing in the middle of a sentence, at verse eight. The twelve following verses (the appendix) stand in no necessary relation to what precedes them. They retell the resurrection

[1] Edmunds: "The Open Court," 1910, p. 131.

story, but with no reference to, or explanation of, the empty tomb or the women's presence, or the advice volunteered by the young man, who, by the way, becomes "an angel" in the story as given by the two later evangelists.

As for the mysterious gap between the close of the genuine Markan Gospel and the beginning of Luke's Gospel—seen in the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts—this, it would seem, indicates that the original ending was suppressed, perhaps because it upheld the view that the appearance of Jesus was phantasmal, like the vision seen by the apostle Paul.[1] When in the second century the Gospels were made part of the New Testament canon, there flourished a sect known as the "Docetists." They derived their name from the belief, distinctive of the sect, that Jesus never appeared in flesh and blood, but only as a phantom. So dangerous had this heresy become that when Athanasius drew up his "creed" he made a place for words that would unmistakably suggest the corporeity of Jesus: "Man of the substance of his

[1] I Cor. 15 : 8.

mother, born in the world." Consequently when the compilers of the New Testament observed the "docetic" character of the resurrection narrative as found in Mark, they naturally suppressed it and inserted a substitute story, one wholly in harmony with the traditional orthodox view of the resurrection. In Matthew's report of a physical resurrection of Jesus appears the striking phrase, "but some doubted." The sentence in which this occurs reads as follows: "And when they (the disciples) saw him (Jesus) they worshipped him: but some doubted." Perhaps Professor Edmunds is correct in his supposition that the author of this Gospel, who evidently based it to a considerable extent on the Markan Gospel, borrowed this sentence from the original ending of the genuine Gospel of Mark.[1] Be this as it may, the reason for the scepticism reported would seem to have been that the appearance of Jesus was of a phantasmal type.

From all that has thus far been said concerning the closing twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark it is clear that we must regard

[1] Edmunds: "The Open Court," 1910, p. 132.

the appendix as unauthentic, as no part of the original Gospel. Gathering the evidence together for this conclusion we have: (1) The absence of the appendix in the two earliest extant Greek manuscripts and its initial appearance in the next earliest manuscript, the so-called "Alexandrian" codex, published in the fifth century or about a hundred years later than the Sinaitic and Vatican codices. (2) The mysterious blank between the end of the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, observed in both of these two earliest Greek manuscripts, clearly indicating the spuriousness attributed to the appendix by the scribes who copied an earlier manuscript in which it appeared, or indicating that even in such an earlier manuscript the appendix was missing. (3) The ending of the Gospel of Mark in the "Peshito"-Syriac version (dating from the second century), at the eighth verse, and supplemented by the words: "Here endeth the Gospel of Mark." (4) The testimony of a tenth century Armenian manuscript throws light on the probable origin of the appendix. Here it is ascribed to one Aristion, a presbyter at

Rome, to whom Papias, about 130 A. D. referred as an oral authority on the life of Jesus in the second century. Aristion, it seems, composed the present ending of the Gospel as a substitute for the original, phantasmal, docetic story, discountenanced by the Church. This theory has the support of most modern scholars. Professor Bacon of Yale University considers it quite certain that the original end of Mark was so unorthodox as to have necessitated a substitute that would fall in with traditional beliefs about the resurrection. What the original ending was is wholly conjectural. Professor Edmunds has essayed a reproduction of it on the basis of allied passages in the Gospel of Matthew and certain Apocryphal Gospels. In his rendering the eighth verse of the Markan story reads: "They were afraid because of the Jews." Then follow the statements: "They told all things unto Peter and his companions who went into Galilee. Then Jesus appeared unto Peter . . . And Peter, with the rest of the eleven, went into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped

him; but some doubted'' (for his form was phantasmal).

Turning, now, to the testimony of the Matthean and Lucan Gospels we observe, after comparative study of their contents, that they differ in eight particulars, all of them pertaining to what transpired at the tomb.

Who were the women at the sepulchre?[1]

At what time did they come to it?[2]

What was the relation of the stone to the sepulchre?[3]

Did one or two angels appear there?[4]

Who saw Jesus there?[5]

What did the women report they saw?[6]

To whom did they report it?[7]

What appearances of Jesus were there?[8]

If, now, we compare the reports of all three Gospels with one another, the points of difference increase from eight to twelve. Placing Matthew's narrative by the side of

[1] Compare Matt. 28 : 1-7 and Luke 24 : 10.
[2] Compare Matt. 28 : 1 and Luke 24 : 1.
[3] Compare Matt. 28 : 2 and Luke 24 : 2.
[4] Compare Matt. 28 : 4 and Luke 24 : 3.
[5] Compare Matt. 28 : 9 and Luke 24 : 15.
[6] Compare Matt. 28 : 9 and Luke 24 : 7-9.
[7] Compare Matt. 28 : 10-16 and Luke 24 : 9.
[8] Compare Matt. 28 : 9 and Luke 24 : 15.

Mark's and Luke's, we see that theirs, as against his, report no guard at the tomb, no sealing of the sepulchre, no great earthquake, no angel from heaven, no purpose in the women's going to look at the tomb (because they had already looked at it carefully before [1]) except to bring spices for embalming the body. When did they bring the spices? According to Mark, it was when the Sabbath was quite passed.[2] But Luke tells us they bought them and then rested on the Sabbath.[3] Matthew, on the other hand, reports no purchase at all. The women, says Mark, came to the tomb after sunrise;[4] according to Luke, it was at early dawn,[5] and in Matthew's account, it was about half a day earlier.[6] Again, Mark tells us "they said nothing to any man;" whereas Luke reports "they told the eleven everything;" while Matthew has no record of any communication, or of their having kept silent.

[1] Compare Mark 15 : 47 and Luke 23 : 58.
[2] Mark 16 : 1.
[3] Luke 23 : 54-56.
[4] Mark 16 : 2.
[5] Luke 24 : 1.
[6] Matt. 28 : 1.

According to Luke, they entered the tomb; according to Matthew, they did not enter it; Mark makes no mention of the matter. He, again, reports a man at the tomb; Matthew, an angel; Luke, two angels. And, whereas, Matthew encouraged the women because they sought Jesus, Luke blamed them for so doing.[1] Mark and Matthew tell us the eleven were to go to Galilee to see Jesus; Luke says they saw him at Jerusalem.[2] In Mark's version of what occurred it was Mary Magdalen, Mary, mother of James and Salome, who came to the tomb. But in Matthew's story it is the two Marys only who came. While in Luke's it was the two Marys and Joanna.[3] Both Mark and Luke agree that the stone had been rolled away when the women came to the sepulchre; but Matthew reports it was rolled back in the presence of the women by an angel. Only Luke relates an appearance of Jesus to two disciples on the road to Emmaus on the resurrection day. Only Luke recounts an appearance to Peter before the

[1] Matt. 28 : 5; Luke 24 : 5.
[2] Matt. 28 : 7; Luke 24 : 15.
[3] Mark 16 : 5; Matt. 28 : 1; Luke 24 : 10.

evening of the same day. And Luke alone tells of an appearance to the eleven and their companions on the same evening. And only this Evangelist gives an account of the risen Jesus telling his disciples to touch him, and eating in their company broiled fish.[1] Finally we note Matthew states that Jesus' first appearance was to the women; Luke, on the other hand, assures us it was to two of the disciples. The genuine Mark records no particular post-mortem appearance; but the first verse of the appendix makes Mary Magdalen the one to whom Jesus first appeared after his resurrection.[2]

If, now, we should proceed with our study of the evidence and essay a comparison of the accounts furnished by all four of the Gospels we should find, as against *eight* and *twelve* points of difference, *twenty-one*. Not to enter upon a discussion of these, which would extend this lecture far beyond its limits, suffice it simply to observe that there is but one point common to all four writers; it is the statement that the tomb was found

[1] Luke 24 : 13 *et seq.*
[2] Mark 16 : 9.

empty. So far, then, as the concurrent testimony of the Gospels is concerned, it reminds us of the conclusion arrived at in our study of the miracles. Applying it to the evidence we have just examined, it is to the effect that somebody said that somebody saw Jesus, somewhere, at some time, somehow, after he had been entombed. In other words, the testimony in support of belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus from the grave, as presented in the Gospels, is insufficient to permit acceptance of the belief.

We come next to the testimony of the Apostle Paul. His evidence has an advantage over that of the Gospels, because while we know not precisely when or by whom the Gospels were written, we do know that the first letter to the Corinthians and the letter to the Galatians were written between 55 and 57 A. D., and these letters are generally conceded to be genuine productions of the apostle. But when we turn to them for evidence in support of belief in a physical resurrection from the grave we find he knows nothing whatever of such a belief, but only of belief in resurrection *from the dead.* In

Corinth that belief—the explanation of which let me reserve for a moment—was denied.[1] So Paul proceeds to confute these sceptics.[2] He relates a succession of post-mortem appearances of Jesus—first to Peter, then to the twelve; after that to "five hundred brethren at once; . . . after that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also."[3] Yet in this enumeration—so strikingly precise, as the words "then," "after that," "last of all," indicate—Paul makes no mention of the reports of the women at the tomb nor of the appearances there, nor of that on the road to Emmaus, nor of Jesus eating fish in the company of his disciples. Paul knew nothing of an empty tomb, or of the visit of the women. Yet Paul was, for fifteen days, the guest of Peter in Jerusalem.[4] Surely the latter would not have withheld any of these details from Paul, had he known them. Nor, again, would Paul have failed to make use of them in his discussion with the Corinthians,

[1] I Cor. 15 : 12.
[2] I Cor. 15 : 13 *et seq.*
[3] I Cor. 15 : 5-8.
[4] Gal. 1 : 18.

had he ever heard them from Peter or from any other source. Nay, more, had the empty tomb been reported to Paul, his whole argument in the fifteenth chapter of his letter to the Corinthians would have been vitiated. Hence we conclude that these details given in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke originated later than the time of Peter and Paul, who knew nothing of them.

Equally noteworthy it is that although twenty years after Jesus' death a tradition was fixed as to the number and order of his post-crucifixion appearances, the Synoptics overlook most of them—the appearance to five hundred brethren, to James, to the twelve. Yet how could all three of the Gospel writers have happened to overlook Paul's testimony when his letter to the Corinthians was one of the earliest of Christian classics? How could Matthew ever slight the report of Paul for that of certain women who said they had seen an angel and that they had found the tomb empty? These questions can be adequately answered only on the ground that the narratives of a physical resurrection eventually displaced the statements of

Paul, who had a vision of Jesus and knew only a resurrection from the dead and apparently construed the appearance of Jesus to others as being similar to the vision he beheld on the way to Damascus.

In the eighth verse of the chapter just referred to Paul says he saw Jesus.[1] But *how* did he see him? To him it was a matter of deep regret that he had never seen Jesus in the flesh.[2] Nowhere does he claim to have seen Jesus between his resurrection and ascension. Not till the year 34 A. D., when on the way to Damascus, heresy-hunting, did he see Jesus, and then it was, as he says, in a vision.[3] That he was given to seeing visions and experiencing various kinds of psychic states, he himself attests in his second letter to the Corinthians.[4] May not, then, the appearance of Jesus to Peter and to the other persons of which Paul tells have been of the same vision-type as his own? Particularly noteworthy is the fact that in Paul's account of these appearances, ending

[1] I Cor. 9 : 1; Gal. 1 : 12.
[2] I Cor. 15 : 8.
[3] Acts 9 : 3-19; 22 : 6-21; 26 : 12-18; I Cor. 15 : 8.
[4] II Cor. 12 : 1-4.

with his own seeing of Jesus, he does not pause to distinguish between the way in which he saw Jesus and the manner of his appearing to the other favored persons. From this we are led to infer that, in his judgment, there was no essential difference between his vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus and the several appearances of Jesus which the apostle enumerated so precisely and in chronological order. Paul, then, does not testify to any physical resurrection of Jesus from the tomb, but only to a vision he had in the year 34 A. D. Nor does he anywhere speak of any such resurrection.

We have thus far considered the evidence of the four main witnesses with reference to the miracle of a physical resurrection of Jesus, *viz.*, the Synoptists and the Apostle Paul.

What value are we justified in attaching to their testimony? Suppose the case were that of proving the signature to a will and that the plaintiff produced four witnesses, three of whom could give no account of themselves, while the testimony of the fourth con-

tradicted that of the other three at every crucial point, what should we say? Well, this is exactly the kind of evidence we have to deal with here in the records relating to the resurrection of Jesus. We do not know who wrote the Gospels, nor *who*, if anybody, saw Jesus after his crucifixion, nor *how* he was seen, nor *when*, nor *where*.

Clearly, then, if belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus is to be established, it will have to be on other grounds than that of New Testament evidence.

Does physical science furnish the needed testimony? And if not, can historical science give us any warrant for the belief that Jesus' dead body came forth from the tomb and that he lived again in the flesh among his friends? Physical science has taught us that death is not the simple thing which an unscientific age thought it to be. Rather is it, as physiology and medical investigations have shown, a complicated series of processes, putting insurmountable difficulties in the way of belief in a physical resurrection. The dying process (and in Jesus' case it lasted six hours) begins with the nervous

system, then follow the glands and tissues, in definite order, according to the nature of the disease; then the blood coagulates and the muscle-plasm becomes increasingly rigid; then the protoplasm of the body undergoes chemical change and the brain-neurons are likewise affected. Hence the reanimation of a corpse, after an interval of twelve or more hours, would involve a repetition, in reverse order, of all these processes. To suppose such a reversion would be, as President Stanley Hall of Clark University has said, "to stultify science and common sense." Did the Fourth Gospel come within the range of our investigation we should have occasion to observe further that physical science forbids the belief that two bodies can simultaneously occupy the same space. Yet this Gospel states that Jesus, after his death, appeared to his disciples in flesh and blood, and, as such, passed through closed doors and solid walls.[1] Physical science, then, compels disbelief in a physical resurrection of Jesus.

What, now, may be learned from historical science? Concerned with the origin and de-

[1] John 20 : 26.

velopment of religious ideas, it makes a most valuable contribution to our subject. And here we revert to that distinction referred to in our examination of Paul's testimony, the difference between resurrection *from the grave* and resurrection *from the dead.* Historical science has acquainted us with the growth of the Hebrew conception of Sheol as it passed from Old to New Testament times. Originally it was believed that after death all human souls, good and bad alike, descend to Sheol, the underworld, in which a colorless, shadowy, monotonous existence was endured. But gradually the conviction arose, and it was well established in Jesus' day, that the good and bad could not occupy the same place nor fare in exactly the same way. Thus Sheol was regarded, by Jesus and his contemporaries, as consisting of two sections, called Paradise and Gehenna—as we already had occasion to observe in another connection. When Jesus addressed the penitent thief, who was being crucified at his side, he said: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," his repentance entitling him, in Jesus' estimation,

to escape from Gehenna. This was separated from Paradise by a gulf, across which one could look, speak and be heard—as we learn from Luke's parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

But life, even in Paradise, had nothing about it that one should desire it, for though its inhabitants did not suffer as those of Gehenna, yet they experienced none of the activities and joys of the upper world, none of its aspirations and achievements. Life was empty, aimless, utterly void of interest or pleasure. Hence, by an altogether natural process there arose the belief that they who were accounted worthy to tenant the Paradise section of Sheol would escape to the light and life of the blessed earth, and on the morning of the Messianic era, when the Kingdom of God would be established there, enter it, in company with all the just and meek then dwelling on the earth. In the chief of the inter-biblical Apocalypses, the book of Enoch, we see this conception in process of crystallization. In the New Testament, profoundly influenced by this book, it is fully formed and has for its clearest and

most persuasive exponent the Apostle Paul. Read again the familiar fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, the one generally read at orthodox Christian funerals; read it in the light that historical science has shed upon its central ideas. "Christ," says the apostle, as he proceeds with his argument in favor of belief in a resurrection from the dead, "is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." In other words, Christ was the first to ascend from Sheol, where life was as a sleep, devoid of all positive action. Then, continues the Apostle, they who have been "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the works of the Lord," shall be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised," clothed in "celestial bodies," to join Christ "at his coming."

Only in the first epistle to the Thessalonians do we find these thoughts presented with imagery more concrete and detailed. The missionary to the Gentiles, seeking to console those who have misgivings concerning

the future welfare of dear ones already dead and in Sheol, writes that "we who are alive and remain on earth till the coming of the Christ" shall not take precedence over those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall be the first to rise, i. e., they who believe that Jesus is the Messiah will be the first to ascend from Sheol and "rise up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." "Then we which are alive and remain (on earth surviving the deceased) shall be caught up together with them" who had died. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."[1] In the light of this thrilling belief is it any wonder that expectancy over the coming of the Christ to establish his Kingdom should have reached an unprecedented level of intensity?

Paul and his contemporaries were literally possessed by the mighty hope of Messiah's speedy advent.

Hence the steadfast gaze into the heavens of the early Christians, watching for the de-

[1] Thess. 4 : 13 *et seq.*

scent of the Christ on the clouds.[1] Hence the intensity of their faith, scorning repeated disenchantments. Hence, too, their appeal to prophecy, drawing strength from Old Testament passages which were thought to refer to the great expectation.[2] Nay more, Jesus himself is reported by the third Evangelist as himself appealing to the scriptures as prophetic of his destiny. "And he said unto them (his disciples): 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead.' "[3]

From what has been thus far said it must be clear that the word resurrection as used by Jesus and his contemporaries signified a rising from Sheol and not at all any physical resurrection from the grave. In his controversy with the Sadducees on the question of marriage in the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus, in harmony with the current Jewish belief that when the Messiah should come all souls in Sheol, worthy of the Kingdom, would rise and enter in, uses the expression, "When

[1] Acts 1 : 11.
[2] I Cor. 15 : 3; Acts 2 : 25, 26; 13 : 34.
[3] Luke 24 : 46.

they shall rise from the dead.'"[1] Such being the belief of that time, it would never have occurred to the disciples to go to the tomb to see if Jesus' body was there. They had no interest in his body, but were primarily concerned with his descent to the Paradise of Sheol. Could he possibly be confined to the underworld? Must he not, somehow, have escaped thence and ascended to heaven and God? And will he not return to earth and usher in the Kingdom of Heaven? Must not he, of all men, be the very last to suffer confinement in Sheol? Such was the natural order of thought that preoccupied the disciples' minds. Think only of their conduct in the most critical hour of their experience as disciples of Jesus and how inevitably would just such reflections and questionings be!

Utterly dismayed and terrified by what transpired in the garden of Gethsemane, they had deserted their Master and hastened back to Galilee to be safely removed from imminent danger.[2] Arrived at the scene of their discipleship, where every familiar spot re-

[1] Mark 12 : 25. [2] Mark 14: 50; Acts 1: 2.

called their Master's face and form and voice and word, a reaction inevitably ensued. Was there nothing to lessen or neutralize the shock of the unspeakable tragedy, no redeeming light to shine in upon the enveloping gloom? Must they admit that the chief priests were right, that the sentence pronounced was just and the deed of Calvary warranted? No, that was impossible, inconceivable. If he was not what they believed him to be, he was something higher than they thought him. If he repudiated *their* way it was because he knew a better through suffering and death. Then perish the idea of his retention in Sheol; he *lives;* he has ascended thence into heaven and there awaits the hour of his return to complete his mission! Had not Moses and Elijah escaped confinement in Sheol?[1] How much more then must he? Had not the Psalmist sung: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption"? Believing this verse to refer to the Messiah, and that Jesus was he, the meaning of the quotation was unmistakable. Furthermore,

[1] Jude 9.

in the exilian Isaiah[1] stood the passage—also construed as Messianic and consequently applied to Jesus: "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," "smitten and afflicted," "he was led as a lamb to the slaughter," "he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," "he hath poured out his soul unto death."

Thus did the disciples, by appeal to their sacred scriptures, supplement and confirm their conviction of the deathlessness of their Master. Not only was it beyond all possibility that one so exalted, so exceptional in character and ability, should keep company with the dwellers in Sheol, but the Old Testament had predicted the impossibility of it centuries before.

Such, I take it, was the order of thought that filled their minds. How else, then, could they think of Jesus except as alive and incapable of permanent death? Was not, in truth, their experience similar to ours? When bending over the body of one excep-

[1] Isa. 53 : 3-12.

tionally dear to us, or standing at the grave where the last sad rites are being performed, our skepticism about immortality, present with us at other times, leaves us. Then is the stone of unbelief rolled away and voices seem to whisper, "He is not here; he is risen." And just in proportion to the grandeur of the life that has departed and the depth of our sense of dependence upon its inspiration, so will be the intensity of our faith that the beloved life perdures, that "the one we held as likest God" is "not dust merely, that returns to dust," but essentially spiritual, and, being so, cannot perish. Precisely so was it with the disciples of Jesus. They had grown to regard him as the first of men and to feel increasingly dependent upon his influence. Hence, when left to themselves in Galilee, memories of the blessed togetherness with him crowded their thought, the remembrance of what he was, what he did, what he aimed to do, what he had left unfinished, took deep hold upon their hearts, even to the point of persuading them to his aliveness and his resurrection from the dead to the life of heaven, certain to return

and fulfil Israel's hope. Had he not said that his cause would soon triumph, that a generation would not pass away until the redemption of Israel would be accomplished, the Kingdom of Heaven established on the earth, oppressors punished, and the meek and pure be the inheritors of the promise? For a time the splendid vision had been eclipsed by the events of the Passover week. The cross seemed to symbolize the crucifixion of the long-cherished hope. He had gone to the realm of shades. But now, from the depths of the disciples' despair, arose the mighty conviction that he could not by any possibility be held there but must have already gone hence. Let, then, the word of the hour be "*watch,* for ye know not at what time the Son of Man cometh." Given this profound and powerful conviction, and it needed only a rumor, or hint, that someone had seen Jesus to start the legend of a physical resurrection. Once started, it would spontaneously grow and take on a variety of statement, each invested with more marvelous detail than its predecessor, precisely as we have seen was the case with other narratives. Thus the

story of a physical resurrection from the grave *followed* the spiritual belief of the resurrection of Jesus from Sheol, or "from the dead," as it was called. It is particularly significant that the first person said to have seen Jesus after his crucifixion was Peter, the impulsive, intense, excitable, mercurial Peter, now pained beyond measure by the memory of his denial of his Master. Could anything have been more natural for a disciple, so constituted and having the terrible burden of disloyalty and deceit, than, upon his return from Jerusalem to Galilee, perhaps while in his boat, fishing, to have had the experience of a vision of the Master whom he had followed but, at the end, denied? All the more probable does this seem when we recall the fortnight's visit of Paul to Peter at Jerusalem. Surely, while entertaining his guest, Peter must have heard from him the story of his experience on the way to Damascus. And in whom, more than in the responsive, susceptible Peter, would such a story be calculated to stimulate the consciousness of a kindred vision of Jesus? Thus Peter's belief in a physical resurrec-

tion of Jesus was *the consequence, not the cause,* of his conviction that his Master was no longer in Sheol but had risen from the dead and that therefore a resurrection from despondency and despair was the supreme need of the hour for him and for all the other disciples.

They all alike had been dull of understanding; now they were aware of their function in the world as perpetuators of the Gospel of their Master. They had fled from his cross, now they were strong and brave to take up their own cross. They had slept in Gethsemane; now they were awake to the call of the hour. They had been sheep, timidly following the shepherd; now they were themselves shepherds, eager to give their lives for the sheep. In other words, the legend of a physical resurrection of Jesus is rooted in a great spiritual fact, namely, the resurrection of courage, faith, consecration and loyalty in the hearts of his disciples; their transformation from victims of discouragement and despair into champions, stalwart and undaunted, of a deserted cause. Tracing the story of a physical resurrection of Jesus back

to its original source we reach at last this spiritual fact of the revived courage and faith in the hearts of his disciples. From this followed directly a transformation of cowards into heroes. From this, again, coupled with the consciousness of what Jesus was to them and in himself, there arose the belief that he could not be still in Sheol, but must have arisen and ascended to heaven. From this belief, in turn, sprang the further belief, originating with Peter, that Jesus had been seen; and from this there was eventually evolved the legend of a physical resurrection.

No feature of the records which report the experiences of the disciples and of Paul is more firmly established than the fact of several appearances of Jesus soon after his crucifixion, recounted in part by the Synoptics and in part by Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians. These appearances are as well authenticated as any fact of ancient history. They were, moreover, the immediate cause of the founding of the Christian church. All scholars, conservative and radical, are agreed upon this point. The only question under de-

bate is the *character* of these appearances, *i. e.*, were they veridical, or were they only hallucinations? This, to be sure, is a problem lying outside the range of Biblical criticism. It belongs to the province of psychical research. And though it seems likely to remain an open question, the researches of psychical science may increase or diminish the probability of a veridical appearance of Jesus. Be this as it may, the vital point to be observed is that all future discussion of the resurrection narratives will hinge on a problem in psychical research. The day of controversy over a stupendous miracle of which the accounts are hopelessly contradictory has passed, and inquiry henceforth can concern only the appearances of Jesus to his disciples and to Paul. And these appearances attest the intense power of Jesus' spirit over the springs of veneration and love in the hearts of his followers. So grandly has he lived and died, so deep and strong was the hold he took upon the lives of the disciples and Paul that a vision of him was the most natural and inevitable of experiences, while a legend of his physical reappearance after

death was the spontaneous and irresistible sequel of the vision. Hence it would seem that we shall make the best use of the resurrection narratives when we see in them illustrations of the truth that spirituality of life is the root of faith in its eternality, that soul-greatness and death are mutually exclusive terms, and that the more fully we live the spiritual life the more persuaded we become of the imperishability of what alone gives worth to human souls.

And now, in conclusion, let us sum up, serially, the results to which our deliberations have brought us.

1. The evidence furnished by the Bible records at our command is inadequate to support belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus.

2. Both physical and historical science compel disbelief in a physical resurrection.

3. Jesus and Paul understood by the word resurrection just what it had signified for centuries among the Jews, namely, ascent from Sheol.

4. The accounts given in the Gospels of a physical resurrection of Jesus originated in

accordance with the familiar law of legendary growth, after Paul's time, and after the belief in the resurrection of Jesus from Sheol had been established in the minds of his disciples.

5. This belief in the escape of Jesus from Sheol was not the cause, but the consequence, of the revival of courage and faith in the hearts of the disciples. But for this belief the disciples would not have rallied from their grief and their abandonment of Jesus' cause. This belief was, indeed, the bridge that spanned the chasm between the death of Jesus and the birth of organized Christianity.

6. Legends of a physical resurrection are therefore the dress in which belief in a resurrection from Sheol was clothed.

7. Christianity, then, was not fundamentally based upon a fiction or on the delusion of two or three women, beside themselves with grief; much less did Christianity begin with a deliberate imposture. It arose from a great fact, a spiritual, not a material, fact, from which other genuine, historical facts followed, the whole constituting the total

spiritual starting-point of the Christian religion. First, the thought of Jesus' personality and influence as it came to the disciples after the desertion of their Master in Gethsemane. Their thoughts of this gave rise to the conviction that he could not be still in Sheol, but must have risen—a conviction reinforced by reference to prophecy, history, and the Psalms. From this conviction followed an immediate transformation of the disciples, from despairing cowards into courageous heralds of the belief that Jesus was alive in heaven and that he would soon return to complete his mission. Finally, from this transformation of the disciples and the heralding of their belief in the ascent of Jesus from Sheol to heaven and his speedy return to earth, there were appearances of Jesus to Peter and to other disciples. And from the reports of these, the legends of a physical resurrection were eventually shaped as we find them in the Gospels.

8. Christianity, therefore, is proved to have been rooted in one of the finest intuitions of the human heart, one that survives all our critical analysis of the records and all

our scientific observations, namely, that the more spiritual the life the less can we think of it as perishing. For Jesus lived so grandly and so gloriously as to have made his disciples certain of his immortality and of the deathlessness of his cause.

VIII

JESUS AND PAUL AS FOUNDERS OF CHRISTIANITY

Jesus lived and died a Jew. Nothing was further from his thought and purpose than a break with Judaism. He professed to introduce no new doctrine, he established no new religion. There is not a single authentic passage in the Gospels to support the belief that Jesus ever founded, or even thought of founding, a church. Had he taken any steps toward establishing a religious institution of any kind we would certainly have known of it. Nay, more, his own disciples never deserted Judaism, but carried on their work within its limits and with no thought of founding a new religion.

The famous saying attributed to Jesus by the author of the Gospel according to Matthew—and only by him—to the effect that his disciple Simon should be known as Peter,

and that on this "rock" (a verbal play upon the name) would Jesus found his church[1]—this saying is obviously spurious, and is so regarded by all representatives of the higher criticism. Jesus would hardly have called Simon "a rock" and then a moment later, almost in the same breath, "Satan," as we see on comparing the first and last verses of the passage in which the august saying appears.[2] Nor does it seem at all likely, or in keeping with the recognized spirit and character of Jesus, that he would have conferred upon any one of his disciples exclusively, least of all upon the unstable Peter, the right "to bind and to loose." Much more reasonable is it to believe what the same evangelist reports in a subsequent chapter, namely, that this privilege was accorded to all the disciples.[3] Moreover, the character of Peter was much more truly symbolized by a reed than by a rock. The fact, too, that neither the Markan nor the Lucan Gospel contains the passage tends to weaken still more its credibility.

[1] Matt. 16 : 18-19.
[2] Matt. 16: 18, 23.
[3] Matt. 18: 18.

Again, it is quite certain that Jesus cannot be held in the least responsible for that congeries of systems seen in the sects of Christianity, nor would it be other than preposterous to suppose that were he to return to earth he would recognize or understand the exclusive claims, the colossal machinery and the stately pomp which characterize the sacerdotal churches of Christendom. Nor, again, can Jesus be accounted the originator of any of the historic beliefs and practices that are typical of Christianity. The belief that man is inherently, constitutionally evil and that his only hope of redemption lies in the bestowal upon him of a supernatural "grace"; the belief that the Church is the door through which all must pass who would enjoy union with God and Christ—these are typical Christian beliefs, yet not one of them can be traced back to Jesus. They all alike originated in the message of the apostle Paul, to whom human nature was corrupt and doomed unless supernaturally saved—a conception, as we shall see, wholly foreign to the thought of Jesus. And the same must be said of those religious practices that are peculiarly

Christian—prayer offered "through Christ," or in his name; worship of Christ; baptism and the Lord's Supper, as sacraments, or indispensable channels through which Divine Grace is vouchsafed to the believers—these typically Christian practices had their genesis not in Jesus, but in the ministry of Paul and his successors.

He held that no one could come into communion with God except through Christ,[1] a view which led, at a later day, to the direct worship of Christ, as God. And from his letter to the Corinthians we learn how Paul converted the common meal of the brethren, the love-feast, or "Agape," into a sacrament by connecting it with his theory of human redemption.[2]

Clearly then, the old Jewish religion, *at its best,* was sufficient for Jesus. I put stress upon the words "at its best" because we must transcend the limits of the Old Testament and read the non-canonical religious literature of the two centuries preceding the birth of Jesus to see the Jewish religion at its

[1] Rom. 6, *et passim.*
[2] I Cor. 10, 11.

best; literature, with the substance of which Jesus had some acquaintance, as is proved by the discovery that certain precepts, in the Sermon on the Mount and in other discourses of Jesus, derive from this inter-biblical literature.

The Jewish religion, at its best, taught reverence, peace, justice, mercy, love; and so did Jesus. All that remained to be done was to make this religion sufficient for all men everywhere; and to this universalizing task Jesus addressed himself. He freed popular Judaism from its narrow provincialism, its excessive ceremonialism, its slavish traditionalism. He brought to the surface the deeper implications of the so-called Mosaic Law, more especially with reference to murder, adultery, and the attitude to be assumed toward enemies.[1] He lifted the morality of the spirit, with its stress on motives and inner dispositions, out from the mass of legalism in which it lay buried, and made it the cornerstone of his gospel.[2] Not even the great Hillel, who was an old man when Jesus

[1] Matt. 5 : 21 *et seq.*
[2] Matt. 6 : 2 *et seq.*

was a little boy, was equal to the task of achieving this necessary advance. He indeed might have done it, as Prof. Toy suggests, had he not been so steeped in Jewish legalism.[1]

Hence it was reserved for Jesus to transcend the reach of the illustrious Rabbi, to manifest that genius which penetrates, reveals, interprets, and to exhibit an originality as genuine as it is rare. Even as the supreme merit of the tree consists in its drawing from the surrounding earth and air the materials wherewith to build the strength of its trunk and the beauty of its foliage, so the transcendent merit of Jesus lay in his drawing from earlier and contemporary literature the materials wherewith to make his gospel a source of strength and inspiration, stamping what he borrowed with the spiritual genius of his own wondrous personality.

Thus Jesus lived and died a loyal Jew, nurtured in the traditions of his faith, proud of its heritage, faithful to its requirements, devoted to its ideals. Being the latest in a long line of Jewish prophets, his aim would

[1] C. H. Toy: "Judaism and Christianity," pp. 266-267.

naturally be not to destroy, but to carry out the Law, to unfold the deeper meanings of the religion transmitted by the fathers and bring it to full-flowering. Had his fellow-countrymen heeded his gospel of repentance, righteousness and outreach toward perfection, Judaism would have entered upon a new career of influence and power. But the leaders of the Jewish people had a different ideal for the nation, and so Jesus died in brave and solitary allegiance to his own ideal.

After his death his disciples proclaimed their belief in his resurrection, his ascension to heaven and his early return to earth to fulfil the function of Messiah. These disciples were, of course, Jews, differing from their coreligionists chiefly in this one particular, the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. All Jews believed in the coming of a Messiah, but none save these disciples, and the converts they made, believed that Jesus was he. Thus there arose, *within the pale of Judaism,* a sect whose members differed from all other Jews in this one respect—they believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would soon reappear in that capacity. This Messi-

anic movement was therefore the germ out of which eventually a new religion was evolved. Be it noted that the primary aim of this Messianic movement was not to teach and spread the gospel of Jesus, but to convince all disbelieving Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, that he had risen, ascended to heaven, and would soon return to earth to inaugurate the Messianic kingdom. It is therefore plain that Jesus cannot be regarded as the founder of this movement, because his primary aim was to prepare men for membership in the coming Kingdom of Heaven.

Hitherto, then, there was no thought on the part of the believers in the Messiahship of Jesus of organizing an *independent* religious movement. These believers were simply a sect of Judaism and nicknamed "Nazarenes" by non-sympathizing Jews.[1] But while no one had as much as thought of launching a new religion upon the world, the rapid growth of this Jewish sect in Jerusalem and its steady spread, far beyond the confines of the capital, struck fear into the hearts of its opponents. They saw the possibility of an

[1] Acts 24 : 5.

absorption of Judaism into Nazarenism; they felt that the integrity and permanence of historic Judaism were jeopardized. To check the growing heresy and stamp it out, a campaign of persecution was hopefully decreed by the authorities of traditional Judaism and passionately entered upon by its devotees. Most conspicuous among the persecutors of Nazarenism was a young man named Saul, later called Paul.[1]

He was born about the year 2 B. C. at Tarsus, in Cappadocia, a province of Asia Minor. Tarsus was a university town, the birthplace of several Stoic philosophers and of the poet Aratus, whom Paul quoted in his speech on Mars Hill.[2] He was born of pure Jewish blood, for he called himself "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." As an index of his orthodoxy we have his description of himself as "a Pharisee of the Pharisees." A Roman citizen he was, withal, having inherited the privilege from his father, a civil right which proved of great practical value to him toward

[1] Probably because he became the apostle to the Gentiles the Hebrew name "Saul" was changed to the Gentile (Roman) name "Paul."

[2] Acts 17 : 28.

the end of his life, permitting him, on the occasion of his arrest and imprisonment, to carry his case to the emperor at Rome.[1] Educated at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel, he was exceptionally well versed in the literature of his people. His first public appearance was at the stoning of Stephen, a member of the sect of Nazarenes, converted from his Greek religion to belief in the Messiahship of Jesus and a powerful exponent of the new faith. In one of his speeches he had declared that when Jesus returned to earth he would do away with the ancient institutions dating from Moses. This radical utterance was promptly construed as blasphemy, and without further ado Stephen was stoned to death in accordance with the provision of the Law concerning blasphemy. And they who were directly involved in this persecution unto death "laid their coats down at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul."[2] Immediately upon the death of the Nazarene martyr a general persecution of the sect ensued in Jerusalem, and its mem-

[1] Acts 28 : 19.
[2] Acts 7 : 58.

bers became scattered over all the adjoining provinces of Galilee and Samaria.[1] And now it was that this young man reveals himself as the most intensely active of all the persecutors. In his letter to the Galatians, written some fifteen years after his entrance upon this persecuting campaign, Paul tells us "how that beyond measure he persecuted the church of God and wasted it."[2] Elsewhere[3] we read the statement that he felt a very "frenzy of hate" for these Nazarenes, "breathing threatening and slaughter," an expression which has not inaptly been compared to the snorting of a war-horse before the battle. So deep-seated was Paul's enmity toward these heretics, who called themselves Jews and yet believed Jesus was the Messiah, that he arrested those who made public confession of this creed, construing that confession as blasphemy. Nay, more, he entered the private residences of persons suspected of holding this belief, dragged them forth to trial and, in some cases, voted

[1] Acts 8 : 1 *et seq.*
[2] Gal. 1 : 13.
[3] Acts 8 : 2 *et seq.*

for their death. Not content with these results, but hearing that the heresy had spread as far north as Damascus, he obtains a permit from the high-priest, authorizing him to go thither and bring the apostles back to Jerusalem for punishment. But on his way his mission suddenly ends, the purpose for which he went breaks down. He tells us that, as he was nearing Damascus, he saw a light in the sky, from out of which came a voice, saying "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And Saul said: "Who art thou?" To which the vision replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Thereupon the would-be exterminator of the Nazarenes became blind and remained so for the space of three days, so that the friends who were with him, but who saw nothing, had to lead him into the city.[1]

This experience marked the beginning of Paul's break with Judaism, his conversion to the faith of the Nazarenes, and then the inauguration of a new religion to be eventually known as Christianity. Not until Naza-

[1] Compare Acts 9 : 7 and 22 : 9.

renism *had broken with Judaism* did the necessary condition exist for a specifically Christian religion. The facts of religious psychology fully attest the credibility of Paul's experience. Consulting the testimony of Professors James, Starbuck, Goddard and other experts in the field of psychology, we observe that never has it been an uncommon thing for people to see a light or hear a voice and thereupon experience a change of heart or a change of religious belief. In the case of Paul, we can account for his "vision" in terms of (a) his temperament, (b) his observations as a persecutor in Jerusalem, and (c) his inner, moral experience. Consider with me, briefly, each of these agencies. Paul was a distinctly nervous person, a man given, he tells us,[1] to strange neurotic experiences, of the nature of visions or trances. Moreover, he tells us he was afflicted with a species of hysteria which seriously handicapped him in his missionary labors.[2] These facts serve to account for his experience so far as its physical origin is

[1] Acts 22 : 17; 9 : 12.
[2] II Cor. 12 : 7.

concerned. To explain its psychological aspect we recall, first, the stoning of Stephen, at which he was present, assisting those who conducted the lapidation. On the way to Damascus the remembrance of all that he then witnessed must have come to him, and not least, perhaps, the singularly trustful, tranquil expression on the face of the dying martyr, to which the writer of the book of Acts so feelingly referred.[1] The prayer, also, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge"[2] (prototype of the prayer on the cross, attributed to Jesus by the evangelist Luke) breathed by the dying Stephen, Paul must have heard and perhaps now recalled. Surely we do not err in thinking that on the way to Damascus the remembrance of that face and that prayer haunted the mind and heart of Paul. Then, too, as a highly educated Pharisee he was familiar with the exilian Isaiah's description of the righteous remnant of Israel, personified as "the suffering servant of Yahweh," who by his suffering atoned for the sins of the na-

[1] Acts 7 : 55; 6 : 15.
[2] Acts 7 : 58-60.

tion. Could it then be that this Jesus was such a suffering servant, that God sided with Jesus and that his crucifixion, far from being a punishment for blasphemy and imposture, was a sacrifice, a propitiation for the sins of Israel? And, if so, then the Nazarenes were right in their view of Jesus as the Messiah, and his death involved more than had been realized. Some such reasoning as this, the dim, vague foreshadowing of Paul's later thought, may well have been part of his preoccupation on that memorable journey of one hundred and thirty-six miles, affording ample opportunity for theological speculation no less than for memories of past persecutions. But we come now to an inner moral experience which I am persuaded takes precedence over both the other causes of his conversion, an experience which the apostle described in terms of a Greek proverb: "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." The allusion is to an incident in agricultural life, quite common in oriental countries even to this day. The farmer driving the ox took the plough by the right hand, and in his left he carried a pointed stick to prod or goad the

ox to steady drawing of the plough. When the farmer pricked the ox rather severely he kicked against the goad. Applied to Paul's experience, the proverb means that it was exceedingly difficult for him to suppress the haunting conviction that the Nazarenes were right no matter how violently he persisted in his persecuting campaign. That haunting suspicion of the correctness of the Nazarenes' position was the goad that severely pricked his mind. And the kick against this goad was the persistence with which he engaged in persecuting these people, every fresh suspicion that they were right being instantly met with new determination to persecute them more zealously than ever. But it becomes increasingly more difficult to down the haunting belief, to kick against the goad; at last it is hopelessly abandoned and the erstwhile persecutor becomes the foremost of defenders and champions. Unable to suppress and stamp out the ever-recurring conviction, he is finally overmastered by it, and the conflict culminates for Paul, with his nervous temperament and susceptibility to trances, in the familiar epi-

sode related three times in the book of Acts and once in the first letter to the Corinthians.

Just as a period of inward disquietude and struggle preceded the mighty change wrought in the apostle, so a long period of tranquil self-collecting and study followed it.[1] Not immediately could he go forth to preach the gospel. There were questions to be answered, doubts to be settled, convictions to be clearly and firmly grasped.

No wonder, then, that after his revolutionizing experience Paul should have sought seclusion and solitude, to the end that he might adjust himself to his new religious environment, grasp the full significance of his conversion and shape his plans for the missionary work to which all his splendid energies would be henceforth devoted.

Accordingly he retires for three years to the outlying region of Damascus, and the fruit of that seclusion is found in the matured thought of his epistles.

On emerging from this retirement and study he preaches in the city of Damascus,

[1] Gal. 1 : 17, 18.

barely escaping with his life.[1] After visiting the disciples at Jerusalem he returns to his native city, from which, after ten years, he is summoned to Antioch to assist in the work of this most important and promising missionary outpost, established under the auspices of the community of brethren in Jerusalem. Here at Antioch it was that the disciples of Jesus and their converts were first called "Christians," the local Gentiles using the word as a nickname. For this datum concerning the original use of the name we are indebted to the compiler of the book of Acts, where, in the twenty-sixth verse of the eleventh chapter, we read, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This was in the year 47 or 48 A. D. From this city it was that, soon after his arrival, Paul started on the first of that series of missionary journeys which constituted his calling for the remainder of his life and which brought the Christian gospel of salvation to Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. He traveled almost incessantly for nearly twenty years, incurring dangers on land and at sea,

[1] Gal. 1 : 18; II Cor. 11 : 32-33.

enduring incredible hardships, thrust into the arena to fight with beasts, driven out of cities, at one time by Gentiles, at another, by Jews; and all the while handicapped by a physical infirmity. Though giving most of his time to the work of preaching and organizing churches, he did not renounce his trade. On the contrary, he made tents whenever opportunity offered, preferring to earn his own living rather than be a burden on the industry of others. He was at Rome in the fateful summer of 64, when Nero accused the Christians of burning the imperial city. Of the terrible persecution that followed this accusation Tacitus has told us. As nothing whatever is known of Paul's death it has been conjectured that he was one of the victims of that Neronian persecution.

Reverting to those three years spent in reflection and adjustment to altered ideas and purpose, let us endeavor to see just what this conversion of Paul involved. In the first place, it meant that he had gained a new view of the crucifixion. Prior to the vision on the road to Damascus, he had looked upon the tragedy of the cross as a just visitation of

the wrath of God upon an impostor—the popular Jewish interpretation of the time. Now, however, he construes the crucifixion as God's free gift of salvation to all who believe in the atoning efficacy of the blood-sacrifice which Jesus offered on the cross. Blood-sacrifice as an indispensable requisite for bringing oneself or others into at-one-ment with God, estrangement from whom is the curse of his wrath for sin that has been committed—this was the ancient long-established Jewish belief of the relation of sacrifice to atonement. Expiation for every sin must be made somehow and by someone—Jesus' crucifixion met this requirement of the Law. Out of love for man and in obedience to God, Jesus suffered and died, thereby expiating the sins of all believers in his sacrifice and at the same time satisfying the requirement of the Jewish Law and the demand of God. Henceforth, this interpretation of the crucifixion, coupled with his belief in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, became the central and all-absorbing interest of Paul's life. Indeed, it was the doctrine that made the break with Judaism

complete, inaugurating a new religion with a new name. Moreover, this concentration of interest upon the crucifixion and the resurrection explains, in large measure, Paul's apparent indifference to the ethical teachings of Jesus. Preoccupied with a new theory of salvation, one that stood in no immediate relation to the ethics of Jesus, it ought not to surprise us that Paul's writings contain practically no allusion either to incidents in the life of Jesus or to precepts of his various discourses.

A second important point involved in Paul's conversion is the new view he took of the Jewish Law. Never did he doubt its Divine origin or its transmission to Israel by the hand of Moses, or the indispensable part it played in the evolution of religion. But in so far as sacrifices were concerned, Paul now felt that the Law regarding them should be abrogated. For a sacrifice had been made which transcended all that ever had been offered. What further need of lambs, or oil, or grain, when a supreme sacrifice, of everlasting efficacy in its atoning power, had been made upon the cross? To reconcile the

Divine origin and the merely temporary usefulness of the Law, Paul appealed to the pedagogues' function in the life of Jewish children.[1] Just as the sons of wealthy Jewish parents were under the supervision of a pedagogue (mistranslated "schoolmaster") who served as companion and tutor until they were old enough to go to school and were then accompanied by him to school and turned over to the teacher, so the Law was such a pedagogue, to bring us unto the teacher Christ; and, once in his presence, all further need and responsibility of the pedagogue was at an end.

Once more, the apostle's conversion involved a new conception of religious fellowship. As a Pharisee he had held the traditional idea that Gentiles must become Jews in order to enjoy the privileges vouchsafed to the chosen people. But now, as a convert, this distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears. "Not by the law," but by "grace" are men saved. Such was the new contention of Paul. He had substituted for a provincial, exclusive condition of religious fellow-

[1] Gal. 3 : 24.

ship one that to him seemed cosmopolitan and all inclusive. He had made the sect of the Nazarenes synonymous with what to him was a universal religion. Circumcision, "Kosher," and all the other peculiar requirements of the Law were now negligible elements, because in the new religion there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for all are one in the sacrifice Jesus made, his grace, in the benefits of which all souls may share.

And here we are brought to another, and the most fundamental, change involved in the conversion experienced by Paul; one that touched the deeps of his moral nature and solved the most perplexing of all his problems. For years he had been conscious of a moral and spiritual wretchedness, due to the discovery that he could not fulfil the law of righteousness as required by Judaism. Now that wretchedness was permanently banished by a mystical appropriation of the superabundant righteousness that was in Christ.

Turn to the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, where, from the fourteenth verse to the close of the chapter, one reads

the most impressive of all self-revelations in the religious literature of the world. That passage is, in truth, the corner-stone on which Paul's plan of salvation was reared. "The good that I would I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do. I delight in the law of God, but I find also another law, the law of my members, warring against the higher law and bringing me into captivity unto sin. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me," who shall free me from this slavery to sin; who endow me with moral power to do the Divine Will? Such was the confession and problem of the apostle. He shared with Jesus the conviction that moral progress is impossible until one has acknowledged the fact of imperfection. He would have responded with a quick amen to that answer of Jesus to the question of the tricky lawyer—and no more authentic saying of Jesus has come down to us than that reply—"Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied: "Why callest thou *me* good, there is none good but One."

But now, whereas Jesus was strengthened and sustained by the conviction of limitless

moral possibilities residing in every human soul, so that he could plead, "Be ye perfect" in your finite measure as the Infinite One is perfect, Paul was absolutely overcome by a sense of moral incapacity to improve. Man, he maintained, is inherently evil, having been under the sway of sin ever since the time of Adam. True, the Law has been given, but who is there that can fulfil it? Man is morally impotent to do what the Law requires. But everywhere in the teachings of Jesus it is assumed that, despite his proneness to sin, man has unexhausted possibilities for moral development as a constant asset of his spiritual nature. If it were not so, what meaning would there have been in the cry, "Repent"? Why should he bid men "strive to enter in," or to "do the will of the heavenly Father," if there be no capacity for moral progress in man?

But Paul utterly despaired of making moral progress save as some power or person could come to his aid. "To will," he said, "is present with me, but *how to perform* that which is good, I find not."[1] Is

[1] Rom. 7 : 18.

there, then, anyone equal to the task of lifting him "from his dead self to higher things?" Obviously only one who has succeeded where he failed, only one who actually fulfilled the law of righteousness could meet his need. Reflecting upon the personality of Jesus, his life and work, his crucifixion and resurrection, there came to Paul the conviction that Jesus alone of all men could help him. For only he had "fulfilled the law of righteousness." He, therefore, must have been of supernatural origin, differing from all other souls in kind as well as in degree. He, and only he, can be in possession of superabundant righteousness. If, then, this could be borrowed, it would enable the apostle to overcome his confessed inability to do the good he would. Such in brief, bare outline was the trend of Paul's thought on this most vital of all moral issues. And when he faced the further question, *how* can this righteousness of Jesus he borrowed, he answered, mystically, "By faith."

And just here we must beware of misunderstanding him. Faith, to him, did not mean any species of intellectual assent to, or

blind acceptance of, a great spiritual good. On the contrary, faith to him had an altogether practical yet mystical meaning. To fix one's thought steadily and intensely on the person and character of the God-man Jesus so that one becomes, as it were, assimilated to him; "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ"; to envelop oneself with Him, as with a cloak; to let Him so function that all one's thoughts, words and deeds are not one's own but, in essence, His—this is what Paul meant by faith. And so far was he from identifying faith solely with an attitude of mind or with an easy luxuriating in the thought of Christ, that he declared it worthless except it be related to moral living. When, therefore, the Corinthian libertines, after hearing Paul's discourse, imagined they could have faith and yet continue to revel in their immoralities, he disposed of their false inference by assuring them that if they had faith, *not even the desire* to do evil would be present with them.[1]

Thus, to the age-long question, "What shall I do to be saved?" Paul gave a new an-

[1] II Cor. 13 : 5.

swer. Confess your inability to fulfil the law of righteousness, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the exceptional, archetypal, celestial man, the second Adam, the Son of God, borrow of his superabundant righteousness by practicing faith, *i. e.*, by becoming assimilated to him, by reproducing in your own experience his crucifixion and resurrection, letting the death of sin in you become, as it were, a repetition of his death and your rising into the new life, a repetition of his resurrection.

From all that has been said it would seem clear enough that *Paul was the founder* of Christianity, founding it when he broke with Judaism. Yet there are certain considerations to be reckoned with that compel our looking to Jesus as having had a part in the founding of the new religion. It must be remembered that without the crucifixion of Jesus and belief in his resurrection there could have been no Christianity. It was in the name of Jesus and on faith in him that Paul presented his new plan of salvation. Moreover, all the while that Paul was engaged in developing his theology and spread-

ing his Gospel, influences were at work that derive not from him but from Jesus, demonstrating that any complete answer to the question, who founded Christianity, must take cognizance of these.[1] For they were present in Christianity at the very start, were acknowledged by the Apostle Paul, and have been, in some measure, realized in every age of Christian history. As evidence of Paul's appreciation of these influences, we have only to recall such phrases as these: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." "Be like-minded one toward another, after the example of Christ." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."[2]

No one can read the Synoptic Gospels without realizing that Jesus' gospel of love and service, regardless of race, class or creed, is the crowning contribution of his message. We see it illustrated in his parable of the good Samaritan, designed, as it

[1] See the illuminating article on this point by Prof. McLiffert in the "Theological Review," April, 1910.

[2] Rom. 1 : 16; 15 : 5; Gal. 6 : 2; II Cor. 10 : 1.

was, to teach not merely the surface lesson commonly drawn from it, *viz.*, that everyone who needs us is our neighbor, but also the deeper truth that the despised Samaritan, representing the very dregs of Jewish society and himself a religious outcast, showed himself neighbor to the wounded traveler and, in consequence, deserved to be regarded as a neighbor by the aristocratic priest and Levite who stood two strata higher in the social scale. We see it again in the beautiful simile toward the close of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus, citing the beneficence of Heaven, which favors with sunshine and with rain the fields of the just and unjust, bids his hearers manifest a love as boundless and unrestrained.

That Gospel has ever been an integral part of the Christian religion and must be reckoned with in any adequate definition of it. So, too, the personal example of Jesus, the example of sincerity, sympathy, and consecration, must take its place among these influences that have ever been present in Christianity; and this, moreover, is an influence that takes precedence over all others

as the most powerful of moral agents in the transforming of character. Nor can we pay Jesus any higher tribute than to say that in his own progressive life he practiced the gospel he preached.

Still one other influence must be included, one that is derived not from Paul but from Jesus, and which in every period of Christian history has made itself felt. I refer to his filial affection and trustfulness toward a higher Power. True, the God-idea Jesus entertained has undergone radical changes, but his spirit of trust abides as a permanent reality of the Christian consciousness.

Here, then, are influences that were operative in Christianity throughout the period of Paul's missionary activity, yet all of them originating, not from him, but from Jesus. While, therefore, we give to Paul the first place, as the direct and immediate founder of organized Christianity, we see that Jesus, too, had an indispensable part in its formation. Without Jesus there could have been no *Apostle* Paul and from Jesus influences emanated that have ever been an inalienable part of the Christian religion. (1)

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